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The Children at Play.

Under the Willow Tree.

UNDER THE WILLOW TREE.

AND OTHER STORIES.

BY

HANS CHRISTIAN ANDERSEN.

TRANSLATED BY

H. W. DULCKEN, Ph.D.

ILLUSTRATED WITH NINETEEN PICTURES.

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UNDER THE WILLOW TREE.

THE region round the little town of Kjöge is very bleak and bare. The town certainly lies by the sea shore, which is always beautiful, but just there it might be more beautiful than it is: all around are flat fields, and it is a long way to the forest. But when one is very much at home in a place, one always finds something beautiful, and something that one longs for in the most charming spot in the world that is strange to us. We confess that, by the utmost boundary of the little town, where some humble gardens skirt the streamlet that falls into the sea, it must be very pretty in summer; and this was the opinion of the two children from neighbouring houses, who were playing there, and forcing their way through the gooseberry bushes to get to one another. In one of the gardens stood an elder tree, and in the other an old

willow, and under the latter the children were especially very fond of playing; they were allowed to play there, though, indeed, the tree stood close beside the stream, and they might easily have fallen into the water. But the eye of God watches over the little ones; if it did not, they would be badly off. And, moreover, they were very careful with respect to the water; in fact, the boy was so much afraid of it, that they could not lure him into the sea in summer, when the other children were splashing about in the waves. Accordingly, he was famously jeered and mocked at, and had to bear the jeering and mockery as best he could. But once Joanna, the neighbour's little girl, dreamed she was sailing in a boat, and Knud waded out to join her till the water rose, first to his neck, and afterwards closed over his head, so that he disappeared altogether. From the time when little Knud heard of this dream, he would no longer bear the teazing of the other boys. He might go into the water now, he said, for Joanna had dreamed it. He certainly never carried the idea into practice, but the dream was his great guide for all that.

Their parents, who were poor people, often took tea together, and Knud and Joanna played in the gardens and on the high road, where a row of wil-

lows had been planted beside the skirting ditch; these trees, with their polled tops, certainly did not look beautiful, but they were not put there for ornament, but for use. The old willow tree in the garden was much handsomer, and therefore the children were fond of sitting under it. In the town itself there was a great market-place, and at the time of the fair this place was covered with whole streets of tents and booths, containing silk ribbons, boots, and everything that a person could wish for. There was great crowding, and generally the weather was rainy; but it did not destroy the fragrance of the honey-cakes and the gingerbread, of which there was a booth quite full; and the best of it was, that the man who kept this booth came every year to lodge during the fair-time in the dwelling of little Knud's father. Consequently there came a present of a bit of gingerbread every now and then, and of course Joanna received her share of the gift. But perhaps the most charming thing of all was that the gingerbread dealer knew all sorts of tales, and could even relate histories about his own gingerbread cakes; and one evening, in particular, he told a story about them which made such a deep impression on the children that they never forgot it; and for

that reason it is perhaps advisable that we should hear it too, more especially as the story is not long.

"On the shop-board," he said, "lay two gingerbread cakes, one in the shape of a man with a hat, the other of a maiden without a bonnet; both their faces were on the side that was uppermost, for they were to be looked at on that side, and not on the other; and, indeed, most people have a favourable side from which they should be viewed. On the left side the man wore a bitter almond—that was his heart; but the maiden, on the other hand, was honey-cake all over. They were placed as samples on the shop-board, and remaining there a long time, at last they fell in love with one another, but neither told the other, as they should have done if they had expected anything to come of it.

"'He is a man, and therefore he must speak first,' she thought; but she felt quite contented, for she knew her love was returned.

"His thoughts were far more extravagant, as is always the case with a man. He dreamed that he was a real street boy, that he had four pennies of his own, and that he purchased the maiden and ate her up. So they lay on the shop-board for weeks and weeks, and grew dry and hard, but the

thoughts of the maiden became ever more gentle and maidenly.

"'It is enough for me that I have lived on the same table with him,' she said—and, crack! she broke in two.

"'If she had only known of my love, she would have kept together a little longer,' he thought.

"And that is the story, and here they are, both of them," said the baker in conclusion. "They are remarkable for their curious history, and for their silent love, which never came to anything. And there they are for you!" and, so saying, he gave Joanna the man who was yet entire, and Knud got the broken maiden; but the children had been so much impressed by the story that they could not summon courage to eat the lovers up.

On the following day they went out with them to the churchyard, and sat down by the church wall, which is covered, winter and summer, with the most luxuriant ivy as with a rich carpet. Here they stood the two cake figures up in the sunshine among the green leaves, and told the story to a group of other children; they told them of the silent love which led to nothing. It was called *love* because the story was so lovely, on that they all agreed. But when they turned to look again at

the gingerbread pair, a big boy, out of mischief, had eaten up the broken maiden. The children cried about this, and afterwards—probably that the poor lover might not be left in the world lonely and desolate—they ate him up too; but they never forgot the story.

The children were always together by the elder tree and under the willow, and the little girl sang the most beautiful songs with a voice that was clear as a bell. Knud, on the other hand, had not a note of music in him, but he knew the words of the songs, and that, at least, was something. The people of Kjöge, even to the rich wife of the ale-shop keeper, stood still and listened when Joanna sang. "She has a very sweet voice, that little girl," they said.

Those were glorious days, but they could not last for ever. The neighbours were neighbours no longer. The little maiden's mother was dead, and the father intended to marry again, in the capital, where he had been promised a living as a messenger, which was to be a very lucrative office. And the neighbours separated regretfully, the children weeping heartily, but the parents promised that they should at least write to one another once a year.

The naughty Boy who ate the Gingerbread Maiden.

And Knud was bound apprentice to a shoemaker, for the big boy could not be allowed to run wild any longer; and moreover he was confirmed.

Ah, how gladly on that day of celebration would he have been in Copenhagen with little Joanna! but he remained in Kjöge, and had never yet been to Copenhagen, though the little town is only five Danish miles distant from the capital; but far across the bay, when the sky was clear, Knud had seen the towers in the distance, and on the day of his confirmation he could distinctly see the golden cross on the principal church glittering in the sun.

Ah, how often his thoughts were with Joanna! Did she think of him? Yes. Towards Christmas there came a letter from her father to the parents of Knud, to say that they were getting on very well in Copenhagen, and especially might Joanna look forward to a brilliant future on the strength of her fine voice. She had been engaged in the theatre in which people sing, and was already earning some money, out of which she sent her dear neighbours of Kjöge, a dollar for the merry Christmas-eve. They were to drink her health, she had herself added in a postscript, and in the same postscript there stood further, "A kind greeting to Knud."

The whole family wept: and yet all this was very pleasant; those were joyful tears that they shed. Knud's thoughts had been occupied every day with Joanna, and now he knew that she also thought of him; and the nearer the time came when his apprenticeship would be over, the more clearly did it appear to him that he was very fond of Joanna, and that she must be his wife; and when he thought of this, a smile came upon his lips, and he drew the thread twice as fast as before, and pressed his foot hard against the knee-strap. He ran the awl far into his finger, but he did not care for that. He determined not to play the dumb lover, as the two gingerbread cakes had done: the story should teach him a lesson.

And now he was a journeyman, and his knapsack was packed ready for his journey: at length, for the first time in his life, he was to go to Copenhagen, where a master was already waiting for him. How glad Joanna would be! She was now seventeen years old, and he nineteen.

Already in Kjöge he had wanted to buy a gold ring for her; but he recollected that such things were to be had far better in Copenhagen. And now he took leave of his parents, and on a rainy day, late in the autumn, went forth on foot out of

the town of his birth. The leaves were falling down from the trees, and he arrived at his new master's in the metropolis wet to the skin. Next Sunday he was to pay a visit to Joanna's father. The new journeyman's clothes were brought forth, and the new hat from Kjöge was put on, which became Knud very well, for till this time he had only worn a cap. And he found the house he sought, and mounted flight after flight of stairs until he became almost giddy. It was terrible to him to see how people lived piled up one over the other in the dreadful city.

Everything in the room had a prosperous look, and Joanna's father received him very kindly. To the new wife he was a stranger, but she shook hands with him and gave him some coffee.

"Joanna will be glad to see you," said the father: "you have grown quite a nice young man. You shall see her presently. She is a girl who rejoices my heart, and, please God, she will rejoice it yet more. She has her own room now, and pays us rent for it."

And the father knocked quite politely at the door, as if he were a visitor, and then they went in.

But how pretty everything was in that room! such an apartment was certainly not to be found

in all Kjöge: the Queen herself could not be more charmingly lodged. There were carpets, there were window curtains quite down to the floor, and around were flowers and pictures, and a mirror into which there was almost danger that a visitor might step, for it was as large as a door; and there was even a velvet chair.

Knud saw all this at a glance; and yet he saw nothing but Joanna. She was a grown maiden, quite different from what Knud had fancied her, and much more beautiful. In all Kjöge there was not a girl like her. How graceful she was, and with what an odd unfamiliar glance she looked at Knud! But that was only for a moment, and then she rushed towards him as if she would have kissed him. She did not really do so, but she came very near it. Yes, she was certainly rejoiced at the arrival of the friend of her youth! The tears were actually in her eyes; and she had much to say, and many questions to put concerning all, from Knud's parents down to the elder tree and the willow, which she called Elder-mother and Willow-father, as if they had been human beings; and indeed they might pass as such, just as well as the gingerbread cakes; and of these she spoke too, and of their silent love, and how they had lain

upon the shop-board and split in two—and then she laughed very heartily; but the blood mounted into Knud's cheeks, and his heart beat thick and fast. No, she had not grown proud at all. And it was through her—he noticed it well—that her parents invited him to stay the whole evening with them; and she poured out the tea and gave him a cup with her own hands; and afterwards she took a book and read aloud to them, and it seemed to Knud that what she read was all about himself and his love, for it matched so well with his thoughts; and then she sang a simple song, but through her singing it became like a history, and seemed to be the outpouring of her very heart. Yes, certainly she was fond of Knud. The tears coursed down his cheeks—he could not restrain them, nor could he speak a single word: he seemed to himself as if he were struck dumb; and yet she pressed his hand, and said,

"You have a good heart, Knud—remain always as you are now."

That was an evening of matchless delight to Knud; to sleep after it was impossible, and accordingly Knud did not sleep.

At parting, Joanna's father had said, "Now, you won't forget us altogether? Don't let the

whole winter go by without once coming to see us again;" and therefore he could very well go again the next Sunday, and resolved to do so. But every evening when working hours were over —and they worked by candlelight there—Knud went out through the town: he went into the street in which Joanna lived, and looked up at her window: it was almost always lit up, and one evening he could see the shadow of her face quite plainly on the curtain—and that was a grand evening for him. His master's wife did not like his galivanting abroad every evening, as she expressed it; and then she shook her head; but the master only smiled.

"He is only a young fellow," he said.

But Knud thought to himself: "On Sunday I shall see her, and I shall tell her how completely she reigns in my heart and soul, and that she must be my little wife. I know I am only a poor journeyman shoemaker, but I shall work and strive—yes, I shall tell her so. Nothing comes of silent love: I have learned that from the cakes."

And Sunday came round, and Knud sallied forth; but, unluckily, they were all invited out for that evening, and were obliged to tell him so. Joanna pressed his hand, and said,

"Have you ever been to the theatre? You must go once. I shall sing on Wednesday, and if you have time on that evening, I will send you a ticket; my father knows where your master lives."

How kind that was of her! And on Wednesday at noon he received a sealed paper, with no words written in it; but the ticket was there, and in the evening Knud went to the theatre for the first time in his life. And what did he see? He saw Joanna, and how charming and how beautiful she appeared! She was certainly married to a stranger, but that was all in the play—something that was only make-believe, as Knud knew very well. If it had been real, he thought, she would never have had the heart to send him a ticket that he might go and see it. And all the people shouted and applauded, and Knud cried out "hurrah!"

Even the King smiled at Joanna, and seemed to delight in her. Ah, how small Knud felt! but then he loved her so dearly, and thought that she loved him too; but it was for the man to speak the first word, as the gingerbread maiden in the child's story had taught him: and there was a great deal for him in that story.

So soon as Sunday came, he went again. He

Knud's disappointment.

felt as if he were going into a church. Joanna was alone, and received him—it could not have happened more fortunately.

"It is well that you are come," she said. "I had an idea of sending my father to you, only I felt a presentiment that you would be here this evening; for I must tell you that I start for France on Friday: I must go there, if I am to become efficient."

It seemed to Knud as if the whole room were whirling round and round with him. He felt as if his heart would presently burst: no tear rose to his eyes, but still it was easy to see how sorrowful he was.

"You honest, faithful soul!" she exclaimed.

And these words of hers loosened Knud's tongue. He told her how constantly he loved her, and that she must become his wife; and as he said this, he saw Joanna change colour and turn pale. She let his hand fall, and answered, seriously and mournfully,

"Knud, do not make yourself and me unhappy. I shall always be a good sister to you, one in whom you may trust, but I shall never be anything more."

And she drew her white hand over his hot forehead.

"Heaven gives us strength for much," she said, "if we only endeavour to do our best."

At that moment the stepmother came into the room; and Joanna said quickly,

"Knud is quite inconsolable because I am going away. Come, be a man," she continued, and laid her hand upon his shoulder; and it seemed as if they had been talking of the journey and nothing

else. "You are a child," she added; "but now you must be good and reasonable, as you used to be under the willow tree, when we were both children."

But Knud felt as if the whole world had slid out of its course, and his thoughts were like a loose thread fluttering to and fro in the wind. He stayed, though he could not remember if she had asked him to stay; and she was kind and good, and poured out his tea for him, and sang to him. It had not the old tone, and yet it was wonderfully beautiful and made his heart feel ready to burst. And then they parted. Knud did not offer her his hand, but she seized it, and said,

"Surely you will shake hands with your sister at parting, old playfellow."

And she smiled through the tears that were rolling over her cheeks, and she repeated the word "brother"—and certainly there was good consolation in that—and thus they parted.

She sailed to France, and Knud wandered about he muddy streets of Copenhagen. The other journeymen in the workshop asked him why he went about so gloomily, and told him he should go and amuse himself with them, for he was a young fellow.

And they went with him to the dancing-rooms. He saw many handsome girls there, but certainly not one like Joanna; and here, where he thought to forget her, she stood more vividly than ever before the eyes of his soul. "Heaven gives us strength for a great deal, if we only try to do our best," she had said; and holy thoughts came into his mind, and he folded his hands. The violins played, and the girls danced round in a circle; and he was quite startled, for it seemed to him as if he were in a place to which he ought not to have brought Joanna—for she was there with him, in his heart; and accordingly he went out. He ran through the streets and passed by the house where she had dwelt: it was dark there, dark everywhere, and empty, and lonely. The world went on in its course, but Knud pursued his lonely way, unheedingly.

The winter came, and the streams were frozen. Everything seemed to be preparing for a burial. But when spring returned, and the first steamer was to start, a longing seized him to go away, far, far into the world, but not to France. So he packed his knapsack, and wandered far into the German land, from city to city, without rest or peace: and it was not till he came to the glorious

old city of Nuremberg that he could master his restless spirit; and in Nuremberg, therefore, he decided to remain.

Nuremberg is a wonderful old city, and looks as if it were cut out of an old picture-book. The streets seem to stretch themselves along just as they please. The houses do not like standing in regular ranks. Gables with little towers, arabesques, and pillars, start out over the pathway, and from the strange peaked roofs water-spouts, formed like dragons or great slim dogs, extend far over the street.

Here in the market-place stood Knud, with his knapsack on his back. He stood by one of the old fountains that are adorned with splendid bronze figures, scriptural and historical, rising up between the gushing jets of water. A pretty servant-maid was just filling her pails, and she gave Knud a refreshing draught; and as her hand was full of roses, she gave him one of the flowers, and he accepted it as a good omen.

From the neighbouring church the strains of the organ were sounding: they seemed to him as familiar as the tones of the organ at home at Kjöge; and he went into the great cathedral. The sunlight streamed in through the stained glass

windows, between the two lofty slender pillars. His spirit became prayerful, and peace returned to his soul.

And he sought and found a good master in Nuremberg, with whom he stayed, and in whose house he learned the German language.

The old moat round the town has been converted into a number of little kitchen gardens, but the high walls are standing yet, with their heavy towers. The ropemaker twists his ropes on a gallery or walk built of wood, inside the town wall, where elder bushes grow out of the clefts and cracks, spreading their green twigs over the little low houses that stand below; and in one of these dwelt the master with whom Knud worked; and over the little garret window at which Knud sat the elder waved its branches.

Here he lived through a summer and a winter; but when the spring came again he could bear it no longer. The elder was in blossom, and its fragrance reminded him so of home, that he fancied himself back in the garden at Kjöge; and therefore Knud went away from his master, and dwelt with another, farther in the old town, over whose house no elder bush grew.

His workshop was quite close to one of the old

stone bridges, by a low water-mill, that rushed and foamed always. Without, rolled the roaring stream, hemmed in by houses, whose old decayed gables looked ready to topple down into the water. No elder grew here—there was not even a flower-pot with its little green plant; but just opposite the workshop stood a great old willow tree, that seemed to cling fast to the house, for fear of being carried away by the water, and which stretched forth its branches over the river, just as the willow at Kjöge spread its arms across the streamlet by the gardens there.

Yes, he had certainly gone from the "Elder-mother" to the "Willow-father." The tree here had something, especially on moonlight evenings, that went straight to his heart—and that something was not in the moonlight, but in the old tree itself.

Nevertheless, he could not remain. Why not? Ask the willow tree; ask the blooming elder! And therefore he bade farewell to his master in Nuremberg, and journeyed onward.

To no one did he speak of Joanna—in his own secret heart he hid his sorrow; and he thought of the deep meaning in the old childish story of the two cakes. Now he understood why the man

had a bitter almond in his breast—he himself felt the bitterness of it; and Joanna, who was always so gentle and kind, was typified by the honey-cake. The strap of his knapsack seemed so tight across his chest that he could scarcely breathe; he loosened it, but was not relieved. He saw but one-half the world around him; the other half he carried about him and within himself. And thus it stood with him.

Not till he came in sight of the high mountains did the world appear freer to him; and now his thoughts were turned without, and tears came into his eyes.

The Alps appeared to him as the folded wings of the earth: how if they were to unfold themselves and display their variegated pictures of black woods, foaming waters, fleecy clouds, and masses of snow? At the last day, he thought, the world will lift up its great wings, and mount upwards towards the sky, and burst like a soap-bubble in the glance of the Highest!

"Ah!" sighed he, "that the Last Day were come!"

Silently he wandered through the land, that seemed to him as an orchard covered with soft turf. From the wooden balconies of the houses

the girls who sat busy with their lace-making nodded at him; the summits of the mountains glowed in the red sun of the evening; and when he saw the green lakes gleaming among the dark trees, he thought of the coast by the Bay of Kjöge, and there was a longing in his bosom, but it was pain no more.

There where the Rhine rolls onward like a great billow, and bursts, and is changed into snow-white, gleaming, cloud-like masses, as if clouds were being created there, with the rainbow fluttering like a loose band above them: there he thought of the water-mill at Kjöge, with its rushing, foaming water.

Gladly would he have remained in the quiet Rhenish town, but here too were too many elder trees and willows, and therefore he journeyed on, over the high, mighty mountains, through shattered walls of rock, and on roads that clung like swallows' nests to the mountain-side. The waters foamed on in the depths, the clouds were below him, and he strode on over thistles, Alpine roses, and snow, in the warm summer sun; and saying farewell to the lands of the North, he passed on under the shade of blooming chestnut trees and through vineyards and fields of maize. The moun-

tains were a wall between him and all his recollections; and he wished it to be so.

Before him lay a great glorious city which they called *Milano,* and here he found a German master who gave him work. They were an old pious couple, in whose workshop he now laboured. And the two old people became quite fond of the quiet journeyman, who said little, but worked all the more, and led a pious Christian life. To himself also it seemed as if Heaven had lifted the heavy burden from his heart.

His favourite pastime was to mount now and then upon the mighty marble church, which seemed to him to have been formed of the snow of his native land, fashioned into roofs, and pinnacles, and decorated open halls; from every corner and every point the white statues smiled upon him. Above him was the blue sky, below him the city and the wide-spreading Lombard plains, and towards the north the high mountains clad with perpetual snow; and he thought of the church at Kjöge, with its red, ivy-covered walls, but he did not long to go thither: here, beyond the mountains, he would be buried.

He had dwelt here a year, and three years had passed away since he left his home, when one day

his master took him into the city, not to the circus where riders exhibited, but to the opera, where was a hall worth seeing. There were seven storeys, from each of which beautiful silken curtains hung down, and from the ground to the dizzy height of the roof sat elegant ladies, with bouquets of flowers in their hands, as if they were at a ball, and the gentlemen were in full dress, and many of them decorated with gold and silver. It was as bright there as in the brilliant sunshine, and the music rolled gloriously through the building. Everything was much more splendid than in the theatre at Copenhagen, but then Joanna had been there, and——could it be? Yes, it was like magic—she was here also! for the curtain rose, and Joanna appeared, dressed in silk and gold, with a crown upon her head: she sang as he thought none but angels could sing, and came far forward, quite to the front of the stage, and smiled as only Joanna could smile, and looked straight down at Knud. Poor Knud seized his master's hand, and called out aloud "Joanna!" but no one heard but the master, who nodded his head, for the loud music sounded above everything.

"Yes, yes, her name is Joanna," said the master.

And he drew forth a printed playbill, and

showed Knud her name—for the full name was printed there.

No, it was not a dream! All the people applauded and threw wreaths and flowers to her, and every time she went away they called her back, so that she was always going and coming.

In the street the people crowded round her carriage, and drew it away in triumph. Knud was in the foremost row, and shouted as joyously as any; and when the carriage stopped before her brilliantly lighted house, Knud stood close beside the door of the carriage. It flew open, and she stepped out: the light fell upon her dear face as she smiled, and made a kindly gesture of thanks, and appeared deeply moved. Knud looked straight into her face, and she looked into his, but she did not know him. A man, with a star glittering on his breast, gave her his arm—and it was whispered about that the two were engaged.

Then Knud went home and packed his knapsack. He was determined to go back to his own home, to the elder and the willow trees—ah, under the willow tree! A whole life is sometimes lived through in a single hour.

The old couple begged him to remain, but no words could induce him to stay. It was in vain

they told him that winter was coming, and pointed out that snow had already fallen in the mountains; he said he could march on, with his knapsack on his back, in the wake of the slow-moving carriage, for which they would have to clear a path.

So he went away towards the mountains, and marched up them and down them. His strength was giving way, but still he saw no village, no house; he marched on towards the north. The stars gleamed above him, his feet stumbled, and his head grew dizzy. Deep in the valley stars were shining too, and it seemed as if there were another sky below him. He felt he was ill. The stars below him became more and more numerous, aud glowed brighter and brighter, and moved to and fro. It was a little town whose lights beamed there; and when he understood that, he exerted the remains of his strength, and at last reached the shelter of a humble inn.

That night and the whole of the following day he remained there, for his body required rest and refreshment. It was thawing, and there was rain in the valley. But early on the second morning came a man with an organ, who played a tune of home; and now Knud could stay no longer. He continued his journey towards the north, march-

ing onward for many days with haste and hurry, as if he were trying to get home before all were dead there; but to no one did he speak of his longing, for no one would have believed in the sorrow of his heart, the deepest a human heart can feel. Such a grief is not for the world, for it is not amusing; nor is it even for friends; and moreover he had no friends—a stranger, he wandered through strange lands towards his home in the north.

It was evening. He was walking on the public high road. The frost began to make itself felt, and the country soon became flatter, containing mere field and meadow. By the road-side grew a great willow tree. Everything reminded him of home, and he sat down under the tree; he felt very tired, his head began to nod, and his eyes closed in slumber, but still he was conscious that the tree stretched its arms above him; and in his wandering fancy the tree itself appeared to be an old, mighty man—it seemed as if the "Willow-father" himself had taken up his tired son in his arms, and were carrying him back into the land of home, to the bare bleak shore of Kjöge, to the garden of his childhood. Yes, he dreamed it was the willow tree of Kjöge that had travelled out

Knud at rest—under the Willow Tree.

into the world to seek him, and that now had found him, and had led him back into the little garden by the streamlet, and there stood Joanna, in all her splendour, with the golden crown on her head, as he had seen her last, and she called out "welcome" to him.

And before him stood two remarkable shapes, which looked much more human than he remembered them to have been in his childhood: they

had changed also, but they were still the two cakes that turned the right side towards him and looked very well.

"We thank you," they said to Knud. "You have loosened our tongues, and have taught us that thoughts should be spoken out freely, or nothing will come of them; and now something has indeed come of it—we are betrothed."

Then they went hand in hand through the streets of Kjöge, and they looked very respectable in every way: there was no fault to find with *them*. And they went on, straight towards the church, and Knud and Joanna followed them: they also were walking hand in hand; and the church stood there as it had always stood, with its red walls, on which the green ivy grew; and the great door of the church flew open, and the organ sounded, and they walked up the long aisle of the church.

"Our master first," said the cake couple, and made room for Joanna and Knud, who knelt by the altar, and she bent her head over him, and tears fell from her eyes, but they were icy cold, for it was the ice around her heart that was melting—melting by his strong love; and the tears fell upon his burning cheeks, and he awoke, and was sitting under the old willow tree in the strange

land, in the cold wintry evening: an icy hail was falling from the clouds and beating on his face.

"That was the most delicious hour of my life!" he said, "and it was but a dream. Oh, let me dream again."

And he closed his eyes once more, and slept and dreamed.

Towards morning there was a great fall of snow. The wind drifted the snow over him, but he slept on. The villagers came forth to go to church, and by the road-side sat a journeyman. He was dead—frozen to death under the willow tree!

IN THE UTTERMOST PARTS OF THE SEA.

GREAT ships had been sent up towards the North Pole, to explore the most distant coasts and to try how far men might penetrate up yonder. For more than a year they had already been pushing their way among ice, and snow, and mist, and their crews had endured many hardships; and now the winter was come, and the sun had entirely disappeared from those regions. For many many weeks there would now be a long night. All around, as far as the eye could reach, was a single field of ice; the ships had been made fast to it, and the snow had piled itself up in great masses, and of these huts had been built in the form of beehives, some of them spacious as the old "Hun's Graves," others only containing room enough to hold two or four men. But it was not dark, for the Northern Lights flamed red and blue, like a great continual

firework; and the snow glistened and gleamed, so that the night here was one long, flaming twilight hour. When the gleam was brightest, the natives came in crowds, wonderful to behold in their rough hairy fur dresses; and they rode in sledges formed

The young Sailor's treasure.

of blocks of ice, and brought with them furs and peltry in great bundles, so that the snow houses were furnished with warm carpets; and, in turn, the furs also served for coverlets when the sailors went to bed under their roofs of snow, while outside it froze in far different fashion than here with us in winter. In our regions it was still the late

autumn-time; and they thought of that up yonder, and often pictured to themselves the yellow leaves on the trees of home. The clock showed that it was evening and time to go to sleep; and in the huts two men had already stretched themselves out, seeking rest. The younger of these had his best, dearest treasure that he had brought from home — the Bible, which his grandmother had given him on his departure. Every night the sacred volume rested beneath his head, and he knew from his childish years what was written in it. Every day he read in the book, and often the holy words came into his mind where it is written, "If I take the wings of the morning, and flee into the uttermost parts of the sea, even there Thou art with me, and Thy right hand shall uphold me;" and under the influence of the eternal Word and of the true faith, he closed his eyes, and sleep came unto him, and dreams—the manifestation of Providence to the spirit. The soul lived and was working while the body was enjoying its rest: he felt this life, and it seemed to him as if dear old well-known melodies were sounding; as if the mild breezes of summer were playing around him; and over his bed he beheld a brightness, as if something were shining in through the crust

of snow. He lifted up his head, and behold, the bright gleam was no ripple down from the snowy roof, but came from the mighty pinions of an angel, into whose beaming face he was gazing. As if from the cup of a lily, the angel arose from among the leaves of the Bible, and stretching out his arm, the walls of the snow hut sank down around, as though they had been a light airy veil of mist; the green meadows and hills of home, and its ruddy woods, lay spread around him in the quiet sunshine of a beauteous autumn day; the nest of the stork was empty, but ripe fruit still clung to the wild apple tree, although the leaves had fallen; the red hips gleamed, and the magpie whistled in the green cage over the window of the peasant's cottage that was his home; the magpie whistled the tune that had been taught him, and the grandmother hung green food around the cage, as he, the grandson, had been accustomed to do; and the daughter of the blacksmith, very young and fair, stood by the well, drawing water, and nodded to the granddame, and the old woman nodded to her, and showed her a letter that had come from a long way off. That very morning the letter had arrived from the cold regions of the North—there where the grandson was resting in

the hand of God. And they smiled and they wept; and he, far away among the ice and snow, under the pinions of the angel, he, too, smiled and wept with them in spirit, for he saw them and heard them. And from the letter they read aloud the words of Holy Writ, that in the uttermost parts of the sea His right hand would be a stay and a safety. And the sound of a beauteous hymn welled up all around; and the angel spread his wings like a veil over the sleeping youth. The vision had fled, and it grew dark in the snow hut; but the Bible rested beneath his head, and faith and hope dwelt in his soul. God was with him; and he carried home about with him in his heart, even in the uttermost parts of the sea.

CHARMING.

ALFRED the sculptor—you know him? We all know him: he won the great gold medal, and got a travelling scholarship, went to Italy, and then came back to his native land. He was young in those days, and indeed he is young yet, though he is ten years older than he was then.

After his return he visited one of the little provincial towns on the island of Seeland. The whole town knew who the stranger was, and one of the richest persons gave a party in honour of him, and all who were of any consequence, or possessed any property, were invited. It was quite an event, and all the town knew of it without its being announced by beat of drum. Apprentice boys, and children of poor people, and even some of the poor people themselves, stood in front of the house and looked at the lighted curtain; and

the watchman could fancy that *he* was giving a party, so many people were in the streets. There was quite an air of festivity about, and in the house was festivity also, for Mr. Alfred the sculptor was there.

He talked, and told anecdotes, and all listened to him with pleasure and a certain kind of awe; but none felt such respect for him as did the elderly widow of an official: she seemed, so far as Mr. Alfred was concerned, like a fresh piece of blotting paper, that absorbed all that was spoken and asked for more. She was very appreciative and incredibly ignorant—a kind of female Caspar Hauser.

"I should like to see Rome," she said. "It must be a lovely city, with all the strangers who are continually arriving there. Now, do give us a description of Rome. How does the city look when you come in by the gate?"

"I cannot very well describe it," replied the sculptor. "A great open place, and in the midst of it an obelisk which is a thousand years old."

"An organist!" exclaimed the lady, who had never met with the word *obelisk*. A few of the guests could hardly keep from laughing, nor could the sculptor quite keep his countenance; but the

smile that rose to his lips faded away, for he saw, close by the inquisitive dame, a pair of dark blue eyes—they belonged to the daughter of the speaker, and any one who has such a daughter cannot be silly! The mother was like a fountain of questions, and the daughter, who listened, but never spoke, might have passed for the beautiful Naiad of the fountain. How charming she was! She was a study for the sculptor to contemplate, but not to converse with; and, indeed, she did not speak, or only very seldom.

"Has the Pope a large family?" asked the lady.

And the young man considerately answered, as if the question had been better put,

"No, he does not come of a great family."

"That's not what I mean," the widow persisted. "I mean, has he a wife and children?"

"The Pope is not allowed to marry," said the gentleman.

"I don't like that," was the lady's comment.

She certainly might have put more sensible questions; but if she had not spoken in just the manner she used, would her daughter have leant so gracefully on her shoulder, looking straight out with the almost mournful smile upon her face?

Then Mr. Alfred spoke again, and told of the glory of colour in Italy, of the purple hills, the blue Mediterranean, the azure sky of the South, whose brightness and glory was only surpassed in the North by a maiden's deep blue eyes. And this he said with a peculiar application; but she who should have understood his meaning, looked as if she were quite unconscious of it, and that again was charming!

"Italy!" sighed a few of the guests.

"Oh, to travel!" sighed others.

"Charming, charming!" chorused they all.

"Yes, if I win a hundred thousand dollars in the lottery," said the head tax-collector's lady, "then we will travel. I and my daughter, and you, Mr. Alfred; you must be our guide. We'll all three travel together, and one or two good friends more." And she nodded in such a friendly way at the company, that each one might imagine he or she was the person who was to be taken to Italy. "Yes, we will go to Italy! but not to those parts where there are robbers—we'll keep to Rome, and to the great high roads where one is safe."

And the daughter sighed very quietly. And how much may lie in one little sigh, or be placed

in it! The young man placed a great deal in it. The two blue eyes, lit up that evening in honour of him, must conceal treasures — treasures of the heart and mind — richer than all the glories of Rome; and when he left the party that night he had lost *his* heart—lost it completely, to the young lady.

The house of the head tax-collector's widow was the one which Mr. Alfred the sculptor most assiduously frequented; and it was understood that his visits were not intended for that lady, though he and she were the people who kept up the conversation; he came for the daughter's sake. They called her Kala. Her name was really Calen Malena, and these two names had been contracted into the one name, Kala. She was beautiful; but a few said she was rather dull, and probably slept late of a morning.

"She has always been accustomed to that," her mother said. "She's a beauty, and they always are easily tired. She sleeps rather late, but that makes her eyes so clear."

What a power lay in the depths of those dark blue eyes! "Still waters run deep." The young man felt the truth of this proverb; and his heart had sunk into the depths. He spoke and told his

adventures, and the mamma was as simple and eager in her questioning as on the first evening of their meeting.

It was a pleasure to hear Alfred describe anything. He spoke of Naples, of excursions to Mount Vesuvius, and showed coloured prints of several of the eruptions. And the head tax-collector's widow had never heard of them before, or taken time to consider the question.

"Good gracious!" she exclaimed. "So that is a burning mountain! But is it not dangerous to the people round about?"

"Whole cities have been destroyed," answered he; "for instance, Pompeii and Herculaneum."

"But the poor people!—And you saw all that with your own eyes?"

"No, I did not see any of the eruptions represented in these pictures, but I will show you a picture of my own, of an eruption I saw."

He laid a pencil sketch upon the table, and mamma, who had been absorbed in the contemplation of the highly coloured prints, threw a glance at the pale drawing, and cried in astonishment,

"Did you see it throw up white fire?"

For a moment Alfred's respect for Kala's mamma

Kala's Bust.

suffered a sudden diminution; but, dazzled by the light that illumined Kala, he soon found it quite natural that the old lady should have no eye for colour. After all, it was of no consequence, for

Kala's mamma had the best of all things—namely, Kala herself.

And Alfred and Kala were betrothed, which was natural enough, and the betrothal was announced in the little newspaper of the town. Mamma purchased thirty copies of the paper, that she might cut out the paragraph and send it to her friends and acquaintances. And the betrothed pair were happy, and the mother-in-law elect was happy too, for it seemed like connecting herself with Thorwaldsen.

"For you are a continuation of Thorwaldsen," she said to Alfred.

And it seemed to Alfred that mamma had in this instance said a clever thing. Kala said nothing; but her eyes shone, her lips smiled, her every movement was graceful: yes, she was beautiful; that cannot be too often repeated.

Alfred undertook to take a bust of Kala and of his mother-in-law. They sat to him accordingly, and saw how he moulded and smoothed the soft clay with his fingers.

"I suppose it's only on our account," said mamma-in-law, "that you undertake this commonplace work, and don't leave your servant to do all that sticking together."

"It is highly necessary that I should mould the clay myself," he replied.

"Ah, yes, you are so very polite," retorted mamma; and Kala silently pressed his hand, still soiled by the clay.

And he unfolded to both of them the loveliness of nature in creation, pointing out how the living stood higher in the scale than the dead creature, how the plant was developed beyond the mineral, the animal beyond the plant, and man beyond the animal. He strove to show them how mind and beauty become manifest in outward form, and how it was the sculptor's task to seize that beauty and to manifest it in his works.

Kala stood silent, and nodded approbation of the expressed thought, while mamma-in-law made the following confession:

"It's difficult to follow all that. But I manage to hobble after you with my thoughts, though they whirl round and round, but I contrive to hold them fast."

And Kala's beauty held Alfred fast, filled his soul, and seized and mastered him. Beauty gleamed forth from Kala's every feature—gleamed from her eyes, lurked in the corners of her mouth, and in every movement of her fingers. Alfred the sculptor

saw this: he spoke only of her, thought only of her, and the two became one; and thus it may be said that she spoke much, for he and she were one, and he was always talking of her.

Such was the betrothal; and now came the wedding, with bridesmaids and wedding presents, all duly mentioned in the wedding speech.

Mamma-in-law had set up Thorwaldsen's bust at the end of the table, attired in a dressing-gown, for he was to be a guest; such was her whim. Songs were sung and cheers were given, for it was a gay wedding, and they were a handsome pair. "Pygmalion received his Galatea," so one of the songs said.

"Ah, that's your mythologics," said mamma-in-law.

Next day the youthful pair started for Copenhagen, where they were to live. Mamma-in-law accompanied them, "to take care of the commonplace," as she said, meaning the domestic economy. Kala was like a doll in a doll's house, all was so bright, so new, and so fine. There they sat, all three; and as for Alfred, to use a proverb that will describe his position, we may say that he sat like the friar in the goose-yard.

The magic of form had enchanted him. He had

looked at the case, and cared not to inquire what the case contained, and that omission brings unhappiness, much unhappiness, into married life; for the case may be broken, and the gilt may come off, and then the purchaser may repent his bargain. In a large party it is very disagreeable to observe that one's buttons are giving way, and that there are no buckles to fall back upon; but it is worse still in a great company to become aware that wife and mother-in-law are talking nonsense, and that one cannot depend upon oneself for a happy piece of wit to carry off the stupidity of the thing.

The young married pair often sat hand in hand, he speaking and she letting fall a word here and there—the same melody, the same clear, bell-like sounds. It was a mental relief when Sophy, one of her friends, came to pay them a visit.

Sophy was not pretty. She was certainly free from bodily deformity, though Kala always asserted she was a little crooked; but no eye save a friend's would have remarked it. She was a very sensible girl, and it never occurred to her that she might become at all dangerous here. Her appearance was like a pleasant breath of air in the doll's house; and air was certainly required here, as they all

acknowledged. They felt they wanted airing, and consequently they came out into the air, and mamma-in-law and the young couple travelled to Italy.

"Thank Heaven that we are in our own four walls again," was the exclamation of mother and daughter when they came home, a year after.

"There's no pleasure in travelling," said mamma-in-law. "To tell the truth, it's very wearisome—I beg pardon for saying so. I found the time hang heavy, though I had my children with me; and it's expensive work, travelling, very expensive! And all those galleries one has to see, and the quantity of things you are obliged to run after! You must do it for decency's sake, for you're sure to be asked when you come back; and then you're sure to be told that you've omitted to see what was best worth seeing. I got tired at last of those endless Madonnas; one seemed to be turning a Madonna oneself!"

"And what bad living you get!" said Kala.

"Yes," replied mamma, "no such thing as an honest meat soup. It's miserable trash, their cookery."

And the travelling fatigued Kala: she was always fatigued, that was the worst of it. Sophy

was taken into the house, where her presence was a real advantage.

Mamma-in-law acknowledged that Sophy understood both housewifery and art, though a knowledge of the latter could not be expected from a person of her limited means; and she was, moreover, an honest, faithful girl; she showed that thoroughly while Kala lay sick—fading away.

Where the case is everything, the case should be strong, or else all is over. And all *was* over with the case—Kala died.

"She was beautiful," said mamma; "she was quite different from the antiques, for they are so damaged. A beauty ought to be perfect, and Kala was a perfect beauty."

Alfred wept, and mamma wept, and both of them wore mourning. The black dress suited mamma very well, and she wore mourning the longest. Moreover, she had to experience another grief in seeing Alfred marry again—marry Sophy, who had no appearance at all.

"He 's gone to the very extreme," cried mamma-in-law; "he has gone from the most beautiful to the ugliest, and he has forgotten his first wife. Men have no endurance. My husband was of a different stamp, and he died before me."

"Pygmalion received his Galatea," said Alfred: "yes, that's what they said in the wedding song. I had once really fallen in love with the beautiful statue, which awoke to life in my arms; but the kindred soul which Heaven sends down to us, the angel who can feel and sympathize with and elevate us, I have not found and won till now. You came, Sophy, not in the glory of outward beauty, though you are fair, fairer than is needful. The chief thing remains the chief. You came to teach the sculptor that his work is but clay and dust, only an outward form in a fabric that passes away, and that we must seek the essence, the internal spirit. Poor Kala! ours was but wayfarers' life. Yonder, where we shall know each other by sympathy, we shall be half strangers."

"That was not lovingly spoken," said Sophy, "nor spoken like a Christian. Yonder, where there is no giving in marriage, but where, as you say, souls attract each other by sympathy; there where everything beautiful developes itself and is elevated, her soul may acquire such completeness that it may sound more harmoniously than mine; and you will then once more utter the first rapturous exclamation of your love, 'Beautiful—most beautiful!'"

THE BISHOP OF BÖRGLUM AND HIS WARRIORS.

OUR scene is laid in Northern Jutland, in the so-called "wild moor." We hear what is called the "Wester-wow-wow"—the peculiar roar of the North Sea as it breaks against the western coast of Jutland. It rolls and thunders with a sound that penetrates for miles into the land; and we are quite near the roaring. Before us rises a great mound of sand—a mountain we have long seen, and towards which we are wending our way, driving slowly along through the deep sand. On this mountain of sand is a lofty old building — the convent of Börglum. In one of its wings (the larger one) there is still a church. And at this convent we now arrive in the late evening hour; but the weather is clear in the bright June night around us. The eye can range far, far over field and moor to the Bay of Aalborg, over heath and meadow, and far across the deep blue sea.

Now we are there, and roll past between barns and other farm buildings; and at the left of the gate we turn aside to the old Castle Farm, where the lime trees stand in lines along the walls, and, sheltered from the wind and weather, grow so luxuriantly that their twigs and leaves almost conceal the windows.

We mount the winding staircase of stone, and march through the long passages under the heavy roof-beams. The wind moans very strangely here, both within and without. It is hardly known how, but the people say — yes, people say a great many things when they are frightened or want to frighten others—they say that the old dead choir-men glide silently past us into the church, where mass is sung. They can be heard in the rushing of the storm, and their singing brings up strange thoughts in the hearers — thoughts of the old times into which we are carried back.

On the coast a ship is stranded, and the bishop's warriors are there, and spare not those whom the sea has spared. The sea washes away the blood that has flowed from cloven skulls. The stranded goods belong to the bishop, and there is a store of goods here. The sea casts up tubs and barrels filled with costly wine for the convent cellar, and

in the convent is already good store of beer and mead. There is plenty in the kitchen—dead game and poultry, hams and sausages, and fat fish swim in the ponds without.

The Bishop of Börglum is a mighty lord. He has great possessions, but still he longs for more —everything must bow before the mighty Olaf Glob. His rich cousin at Thyland is dead, and his widow is to have the rich inheritance. But how comes it that one relation is always harder towards another than even strangers would be? The widow's husband had possessed all Thyland, with the exception of the Church property. Her son was not at home. In his boyhood he had already started on a journey, for his desire was to see foreign lands and strange people. For years there had been no news of him. Perhaps he had long been laid in the grave, and would never come back to his home to rule where his mother then ruled.

"What has a woman to do with rule?" said the bishop.

He summoned the widow before a court; but what did he gain thereby? The widow had never been disobedient to the law, and was strong in her just rights.

Bishop Olaf of Börglum, what dost thou purpose? What writest thou on yonder smooth parchment, sealing it with thy seal, and intrusting it to the horsemen and servants, who ride away—far away—to the city of the Pope?

It is the time of falling leaves and of stranded ships, and soon icy winter will come.

Twice had icy winter returned before the bishop welcomed the horsemen and servants back to their home. They came from Rome with a papal decree—a ban, or bull, against the widow who had dared to offend the pious bishop.

"Cursed be she, and all that belongs to her. Let her be expelled from the congregation and the Church. Let no man stretch forth a helping hand to her, and let friends and relations avoid her as a plague and a pestilence!"

"What will not bend must break," said the Bishop of Börglum.

And all forsake the widow; but she holds fast to her God. He is her helper and defender.

One servant only—an old maid—remained faithful to her; and, with the old servant, the widow herself followed the plough; and the crop grew, though the land had been cursed by the Pope and the bishop.

"Thou child of hell, I will yet carry out my purpose!" cried the bishop. "Now will I lay the hand of the Pope upon thee, to summon thee before the tribunal that shall condemn thee!"

Then did the widow yoke the two last oxen that remained to her to a waggon, and mounted upon it, with her old servant, and travelled away across the heath out of the Danish land. As a stranger she came into a foreign country, where a strange tongue was spoken and where new customs prevailed. Farther and farther she journeyed, to where green hills rise into mountains and the vine clothes their sides. Strange merchants drive by her, and they look anxiously after their waggons laden with merchandise. They fear an attack from the armed followers of the robber-knights. The two poor women, in their humble vehicle drawn by two black oxen, travel fearlessly through the dangerous sunken road and through the darksome forest. And now they were in Franconia. And there met them a stalwart knight, with a train of twelve armed followers. He paused, gazed at the strange vehicle, and questioned the women as to the goal of their journey and the place whence they came. Then one of them mentioned Thyland in Denmark, and spoke of her sorrows — of

her woes—which were soon to cease, for so Divine Providence had willed it. For the stranger knight is the widow's son. He seized her hand, he embraced her, and the mother wept. For years she had not been able to weep, but had only bitten her lips till the blood started.

It is the time of falling leaves and of stranded ships, and soon will icy winter come.

The sea rolled wine-tubs to the shore for the bishop's cellar. In the kitchen the deer roasted on the spit before the fire. At Börglum it was warm and cheerful in the heated rooms, while cold winter raged without, when a piece of news was brought to the bishop: "Jens Glob, of Thyland, has come back, and his mother with him." Jens Glob laid a complaint against the bishop and summoned him before the temporal and the spiritual court.

"That will avail him little," said the bishop. "Best leave off thy efforts, knight Jens."

Again it is the time of falling leaves, of stranded ships—icy winter comes again, and the "white bees" are swarming, and sting the traveller's face till they melt.

"Keen weather to-day," say the people, as they step in.

Jens Glob meets his Mother.

Jens Glob stands so deeply wrapped in thought that he singes the skirt of his wide garment.

"Thou Börglum bishop," he exclaims, "I shall subdue thee after all! Under the shield of the Pope, the law cannot reach thee; but Jens Glob shall reach thee!"

Then he writes a letter to his brother-in-law, Olaf Hase, in Sallingland, and prays that knight to meet him on Christmas-eve, at mass, in the church at Widberg. The bishop himself is to read the mass, and consequently will journey from Börglum to Thyland; and this is known to Jens Glob.

Moorland and meadow are covered with ice and snow. The marsh will bear horse and rider, the bishop with his priests and armed men. They ride the shortest way, through the waving reeds, where the wind moans sadly.

Blow thy brazen trumpet, thou trumpeter clad in foxskin! it sounds merrily in the clear air. So they ride on over heath and moorland—over what is the garden of Fata Morgana in the hot summer, though now icy, like all the country—towards the church of Widberg.

The wind is blowing his trumpet too — blowing it harder and harder. He blows up a storm — a

terrible storm — that increases more and more. Towards the church they ride as fast as they may through the storm. The church stands firm, but the storm careers on over field and moorland, over land and sea.

Börglum's bishop reaches the church; but Olaf Hase will scarce do so, hard as he may ride. He journeys with his warriors on the farther side of the bay, to help Jens Glob, now that the bishop is to be summoned before the judgment-seat of the Highest.

The church is the judgment hall; the altar is the council table. The lights burn clear in the heavy brass candelabra. The storm reads out the accusation and the sentence, roaming in the air over moor and heath and over the rolling waters. No ferry-boat can sail over the bay in such weather as this.

Olaf Hase makes halt at Ottesworde. There he dismisses his warriors, presents them with their horses and harness, and gives them leave to ride home and greet his wife. He intends to risk his life alone in the roaring waters; but they are to bear witness for him that it is not his fault if Jens Glob stands without reinforcement in the church at Widberg. The faithful warriors will not leave

him, but follow him out into the deep waters. Ten of them are carried away, but Olaf Hase and two of the youngest men reach the farther side. They have still four miles to ride.

It is past midnight. It is Christmas. The wind has abated. The church is lighted up; the gleaming radiance shines through the window-frames and pours out over meadow and heath. The mass has long been finished, silence reigns in the church, and the wax is heard dropping from the candles to the stone pavement. And now Olaf Hase arrives.

In the forecourt Jens Glob greets him kindly, and says,

"I have just made an agreement with the bishop."

"Sayest thou so?" replied Olaf Hase. "Then neither thou nor the bishop shall quit this church alive."

And the sword leaps from the scabbard, and Olaf Hase deals a blow that makes the panel of the church door, which Jens Glob hastily closes between them, fly in fragments.

"Hold, brother! First, hear what the agreement was that I made. I have slain the bishop and his warriors and priests. They will have no word more to say in the matter, nor will I speak

again of all the wrong that my mother has endured."

The long wicks of the altar lights glimmer red; but there is a redder gleam upon the pavement, where the bishop lies with cloven skull, and his dead warriors around him, in the quiet of the holy Christmas night.

And four days afterwards the bells toll for a funeral in the convent of Börglum. The murdered bishop and the slain warriors and priests are displayed under a black canopy, surrounded by candelabra decked with crape. There lies the dead man, in the black cloak wrought with silver, the crosier in the powerless hand that was once so mighty. The incense rises in clouds, and the monks chant the funeral hymn. It sounds like a wail—it sounds like a sentence of wrath and condemnation that must be heard far over the land, carried by the wind, sung by the wind—the wail that sometimes is silent, but never dies; for ever again it rises in song, singing even into our own time this legend of the Bishop of Börglum and his hard nephew. It is heard in the dark night by the frightened husbandman, driving by in the heavy sandy road past the convent of Börglum. It is heard by the sleepless listener in the thickly-

walled rooms at Börglum. And not only to the ear of superstition is the sighing and the tread of hurrying feet audible in the long echoing passages leading to the convent door that has long been locked. The door still seems to open, and the lights seem to flame in the brazen candlesticks; the fragrance of incense arises; the church gleams in its ancient splendour; and the monks sing and say the mass over the slain bishop, who lies there in the black silver-embroidered mantle, with the crozier in his powerless hand; and on his pale proud forehead gleams the red wound like fire, and there burn the worldly mind and the wicked thoughts.

Sink down into his grave — into oblivion — ye terrible shapes of the times of old!

Hark to the raging of the angry wind, sounding above the rolling sea. A storm approaches without, calling aloud for human lives. The sea has not put on a new mind with the new time. This night it is a horrible pit to devour up lives, and to-morrow, perhaps, it may be a glassy mirror — even as in the old time that we have buried. Sleep sweetly, if thou canst sleep!

Now it is morning.

The new time flings sunshine into the room. The wind still keeps up mightily. A wreck is announced—as in the old time.

During the night down yonder by Lökken, the little fishing village with the red-tiled roofs — we can see it up here from the window — a ship has come ashore. It has struck, and is fast imbedded in the sand; but the rocket apparatus has thrown a rope on board, and formed a bridge from the wreck to the mainland; and all on board are saved, and reach the land, and are wrapped in warm blankets; and to-day they are invited to the farm at the convent of Börglum. In comfortable rooms they encounter hospitality and friendly faces. They are addressed in the language of their country, and the piano sounds for them with melodies of their native land; and before these have died away and the chord has been struck, the wire of thought that reaches to the land of the sufferers announces that they are rescued. Then their anxieties are dispelled; and at even they join in the dance at the feast given in the great hall at Börglum. Waltzes and Styrian dances are given, and Danish popular songs, and melodies of foreign lands in these modern times.

Blessed be thou, new time! Speak thou of

summer and of purer gales! Send thy sunbeams gleaming into our hearts and thoughts! On thy glowing canvas let them be painted — the dark legends of the rough hard times that are past.

ANNE LISBETH.

ANNE LISBETH had a colour like milk and blood; young, fresh, and merry, she looked beautiful, with gleaming white teeth and clear eyes; her footstep was light in the dance, and her mind was lighter still. And what came of of it all? Her son was an ugly brat! Yes, he was not pretty; so he was put out to be nursed by the labourer's wife. Anne Lisbeth was taken into the count's castle, and sat there in the splendid room arrayed in silks and velvets; not a breath of wind might blow upon her, and no one was allowed to speak a harsh word to her. No, that might not be, for she was nurse to the count's child, which was delicate and fair as a Prince, and beau-

tiful as an angel; and how she loved this child! Her own boy was provided for at the labourer's, where the mouth boiled over more frequently than the pot, and where, in general, no one was at home to take care of the child. Then he would cry; but what nobody knows, that nobody cares for, and he would cry till he was tired, and then he fell asleep; and in sleep one feels neither hunger nor thirst. A capital invention is sleep.

With years, just as weeds shoot up, Anne Lisbeth's child grew, but yet they said his growth was stunted; but he had quite become a member of the family in which he dwelt; they had received money to keep him. Anne Lisbeth was rid of him for good. She had become a town lady, and had a comfortable home of her own; and out of doors she wore a bonnet, when she went out for a walk; but she never walked out to see the labourer—that was too far from the town; and indeed she had nothing to go for: the boy belonged to the labouring people, and she said he could eat his food, and he should do something to earn his food, and consequently he kept Matz's red cow. He could already tend cattle and make himself useful.

The big dog, by the yard gate of the nobleman's mansion, sits proudly in the sunshine on the top of

the kennel, and barks at every one who goes by: if it rains he creeps into his house, and there he is warm and dry. Ann Lisbeth's boy sat in the sunshine on the fence of the field, and cut out a pole-pin. In the spring he knew of three strawberry plants that were in blossom, and would certainly bear fruit, and that was his most hopeful thought; but they came to nothing. He sat out in the rain in foul weather, and was wet to the skin, and afterwards the cold wind dried the clothes on his back. When he came to the lordly farm-yard he was hustled and cuffed, for the men and maidens declared he was horribly ugly; but he was used to that—loved by nobody!

That was how it went with Anne Lisbeth's boy; and how could it go otherwise? It was, once for all, his fate to be beloved by nobody.

Till now a "land crab," the land at last threw him overboard. He went to sea in a wretched vessel, and sat by the helm while the skipper sat over the grog-can. He was dirty and ugly, half frozen and half starved: one would have thought he had never had enough; and that really was the case.

It was late in autumn, in rough, wet, windy weather; the wind cut cold through the thickest

clothing, especially at sea; and out to sea went a wretched boat, with only two men on board, or, properly speaking, with only a man and a half, the skipper and his boy. It had only been a kind of twilight all day, and now it became dark, and it was bitter cold. The skipper drank a dram, which was to warm him from within. The bottle was old, and the glass too; it was whole at the top, but the foot was broken off, and therefore it stood upon a little carved block of wood painted blue. "A dram comforts one, and two are better still," thought the skipper. The boy sat at the helm, which he held fast in his hard seamed hands: he was ugly, and his hair was matted, and he looked crippled and stunted; he was the field labourer's boy, though in the church register he was entered as Anne Lisbeth's son.

The wind cut its way through the rigging, and the boat cut through the sea. The sail blew out, filled by the wind, and they drove on in wild career. It was rough and wet around and above, and it might come worse still. Hold! what was that? what struck there? what burst yonder? what seized the boat? It heeled, and lay on its beam ends! Was it a waterspout? Was it a heavy sea coming suddenly down? The boy at the helm

cried out aloud, "Heaven help us!" The boat had struck on a great rock standing up from the depths of the sea, and it sank like an old shoe in a puddle; it sank "with man and mouse," as the saying is; and there were mice on board, but only one man and a half, the skipper and the labourer's boy. No one saw it but the swimming seagulls and the fishes down yonder, and even they did not see it rightly, for they started back in terror when the water rushed into the ship and it sank. There it lay scarce a fathom below the surface, and those two were provided for, buried and forgotten! Only the glass with the foot of blue wood did not sink, for the wood kept it up; the glass drifted away, to be broken and cast up on the shore—where and when? But, indeed, that is of no consequence. It had served its time, and it had been loved, which Anne Lisbeth's boy had not been. But in heaven no soul will be able to say, "Never loved!"

Anne Lisbeth had lived in the city for many years. She was called Madame, and felt her dignity, when she remembered the old "noble" days in which she had driven in the carriage and had associated with countesses and baronesses. Her beautiful noble-child was the dearest angel, the kindest heart; he had loved her so much, and

Anne Lisbeth's Boy.

she had loved him in return; they had kissed and loved each other, and the boy had been her joy, her second life. Now he was so tall, and was fourteen years old, handsome and clever: she had not seen him since she carried him in her arms; for many years she had not been in the count's palace, for indeed it was quite a journey thither.

"I must once make an effort and go," said Anne Lisbeth. "I must go to my darling, to my sweet

count's child. Yes, he certainly must long to see me too, the young count; he thinks of me and loves me as in those days when he flung his angel arms round my neck and cried, 'Anne Liz!' It sounded like music. Yes, I must make an effort to see him again."

She drove across the country in a grazier's cart, and then got out and continued her journey on foot, and thus reached the count's castle. It was great and magnificent as it had always been, and the garden looked the same as ever; but all the people there were strangers to her; not one of them knew Anne Lisbeth, and they did not know of what consequence she had once been there, but she felt sure the countess would let them know it, and her darling boy too. How she longed to see him!

Now Anne Lisbeth was at her journey's end. She was kept waiting a considerable time, and for those who wait time passes slowly. But before the great people went to table she was called in and accosted very graciously. She was to see her sweet boy after dinner, and then she was to be called in again.

How tall and slender and thin he had grown! But he had still his beautiful eyes and the angel-sweet mouth! He looked at her, but he said not

a word: certainly he did not know her. He turned round and was about to go away, but she seized his hand and pressed it to her mouth. "Good, good!" said he; and with that he went out of the room—he who filled her every thought—he whom she had loved best, and who was her whole earthly pride. Anne Lisbeth went out of the castle into the open highway, and she felt very mournful: he had been so cold and strange to her, had not a word nor a thought for her, he whom she had once carried day and night, and whom she still carried in her dreams.

A great black raven shot down in front of her on to the high road, and croaked and croaked again.

"Ha!" she said, "what bird of ill omen art thou?"

She came past the hut of the labourer; the wife stood at the door, and the two women spoke to one another.

"You look well," said the woman. "You are plump and fat; you are well off."

"Oh, yes," answered Anne Lisbeth.

"The boat went down with them," continued the woman. "Hans skipper and the boy were both drowned. There's an end of *them*. I always thought the boy would be able to help me out with

a few dollars. He 'll never cost *you* anything more, Anne Lisbeth."

"So they were drowned?" Anne Lisbeth repeated; and then nothing more was said on the subject.

Anne Lisbeth was very low-spirited because her count-child had shown no disposition to talk with her who loved him so well, and who had journeyed all that way to get a sight of him; and the journey had cost money too, though the pleasure she had derived from it was not great. Still she said not a word about this. She would not relieve her heart by telling the labourer's wife about it, lest the latter should think she did not enjoy her former position at the castle. Then the raven screamed again, and flew past over her once more.

"The black wretch!" said Anne Lisbeth; "he'll end by frightening me to-day."

She had brought coffee and chicory with her, for she thought it would be a charity towards the poor woman to give them to her to boil a cup of coffee, and then she herself would take a cup too. The woman prepared the coffee, and in the meantime Anne Lisbeth sat down upon a chair and fell asleep. There she dreamed of something she had never dreamed before: singularly enough, she

Anne Lisbeth at the Labourer's cottage.

dreamed of her own child that had wept and hungered there in the labourer's hut, had been hustled about in heat and in cold, and was now lying in the depths of the sea, Heaven knows where. She dreamed she was sitting in the hut, where the woman was busy preparing the coffee—she could smell the roasting coffee beans. But suddenly it seemed to her that there stood on the threshold a beautiful young form, as beautiful as the count's

child; and this apparition said to her, "The world is passing away! Hold fast to me, for you are my mother, after all. You have an angel in heaven. Hold me fast!" And the child-angel stretched out its hand to her; and there was a terrible crash, for the world was going to pieces, and the angel was raising himself above the earth, and holding her by the sleeve so tightly, it seemed to her, that she was lifted up from the ground; but, on the other hand, something heavy hung at her feet and dragged her down, and it seemed to her that hundreds of women clung to her, and cried, "If thou art to be saved, we must be saved too! Hold fast! hold fast!" And then they all hung on to her; but there were too many of them, and—*ritsch! ratsch!*—the sleeve tore, and Anne Lisbeth fell down in horror—and awoke. And indeed she was on the point of falling over, with the chair on which she sat; she was so startled and alarmed that she could not recollect what it was she had dreamed, but she remembered that it had been something dreadful.

The coffee was taken, and they had a quiet chat together; and then Anne Lisbeth went away towards the little town where she was to meet the carrier, and to drive back with him to her own

home. But when she came to speak to him, he said he should not be ready to start before the evening of the next day. She began to think about the expense and the length of the way, and when she considered that the route by the sea shore was shorter by two miles than the other, and that the weather was clear and the moon shone, she determined to make her way on foot, and to start at once, that she might be at home by next day.

The sun had set, and the evening bells, tolled in the towers of the village churches, still sounded through the air; but no, it was not the bells, but the cry of the frogs in the marshes. Now they were silent, and all around was still; not a bird was heard, for they were all gone to rest; and even the owl seemed to be at home; deep silence reigned on the margin of the forest and by the sea shore: as Anne Lisbeth walked on she could hear her own footsteps on the sand; there was no sound of waves in the sea; everything out in the deep waters had sunk to silence. All was quiet there, the living and the dead creatures of the sea.

Anne Lisbeth walked on "thinking of nothing at all," as the saying is, or rather, her thoughts wandered; but thoughts had not wandered away from her, for they are never absent from us, they

only slumber. But those that have not yet stirred come forth at their time, and begin to stir sometimes in the heart and sometimes in the head, and seem to come upon us as if from above.

It is written that a good deed bears its fruit of blessing, and it is also written that sin is death. Much has been written and much has been said which one does not know or think of in general; and thus it was with Anne Lisbeth. But it may happen that a light arises within one, and that the forgotten things may approach.

All virtues and all vices lie in our hearts. They are in mine and in thine; they lie there like little grains of seed; and then from without comes a ray of sunshine or the touch of an evil hand, or may be you turn the corner and go to the right or to the left, and that may be decisive; for the little seed-corn perhaps is stirred, and it swells and shoots up, and it bursts, and pours its sap into all your blood, and then your career has commenced. There are tormenting thoughts, which one does not feel when one walks on with slumbering senses, but they are there, fermenting in the heart. Anne Lisbeth walked on thus with her senses half in slumber, but the thoughts were fermenting within her. From one Shrove Tuesday to the next there

comes much that weighs upon the heart — the reckoning of a whole year: much is forgotten, sins against Heaven in word and in thought, against our neighbour, and against our own conscience. We don't think of these things, and Anne Lisbeth did not think of them. She had committed no crime against the law of the land; she was very respectable, an honoured and well-placed person, that she knew. And as she walked along by the margin of the sea, what was it she saw lying there? An old hat—a man's hat. Now, where might that have been washed overboard? She came nearer, and stopped to look at the hat. Ha! what was lying yonder? She shuddered; but it was nothing save a heap of sea grass and tangle flung across a long stone; but it looked just like a corpse: it was only sea grass and tangle, and yet she was frightened at it; and as she turned away to walk on, much came into her mind that she had heard in her childhood—old superstitions of spectres by the sea shore, of the ghosts of drowned but unburied people whose corpses have been washed up on to the desert shore. The body, she had heard, could do harm to none, but the spirit could pursue the lonely wanderer, and attach itself to him, and demand to be carried to the churchyard, that it might

rest in consecrated ground. "Hold fast! hold fast!" the spectre would then cry; and while Anne Lisbeth murmured the words to herself, her whole dream suddenly stood before her just as she had dreamed it, when the mothers clung to her and had repeated this word, amid the crash of the world, when her sleeve was torn and she slipped out of the grasp of her child, who wanted to hold her up in that terrible hour. Her child—her own child—which she had never loved, now lay buried in the sea, and might rise up like a spectre from the waters, and cry "Hold fast! carry me to consecrated earth!" And as these thoughts passed through her mind, fear gave speed to her feet, so that she walked on faster and faster; fear came upon her like the touch of a cold wet hand that was laid upon her heart, so that she almost fainted. And as she looked out across the sea, all there grew darker and darker; a heavy mist came rolling onward, and clung round bush and tree, twisting them into fantastic shapes. She turned round and glanced up at the moon, which had risen behind her. It looked like a pale, rayless surface; and a deadly weight appeared to cling to her limbs. "Hold fast!" thought she; and when she turned round a second time and looked at the moon, its

white face seemed quite close to her, and the mist hung like a pale garment from her shoulders. "Hold fast! carry me to consecrated earth!" sounded in her ears in strange hollow tones. The sound did not come from frogs or ravens; she saw no signs of any such creatures. "A grave! dig me a grave!" was repeated quite loud. Yes, it was the spectre of her child, the child that lay in the ocean, and whose spirit could have no rest until it was carried to the churchyard, and until a grave had been dug for it in consecrated ground. Thither she would go, and there she would dig; and she went on in the direction of the church, and the weight on her heart seemed to grow lighter, and even to vanish altogether; but when she turned to go home by the shortest way, it returned. "Hold fast! hold fast!" and the words came quite clear, though they were like the croak of a frog or the wail of a bird, "A grave! dig me a grave!"

The mist was cold and damp; her hands and face were cold and damp with horror; a heavy weight again seized her and clung to her, and in her mind a great space opened for thoughts that had never before been there.

Here in the North the beech wood often buds in a single night, and in the morning sunlight it

appears in its full glory of youthful green; and thus in a single instant can the consciousness unfold itself of the sin that has been contained in the thoughts, words, and works of our past life. It springs up and unfolds itself in a single second when once the conscience is awakened; and God wakens it when we least expect it. Then we find no excuse for ourselves — the deed is there, and bears witness against us; the thoughts seem to become words, and to sound far out into the world. We are horrified at the thought of what we have carried within us, and have not stifled over what we have sown in our thoughtlessness and pride. The heart hides within itself all the virtues and likewise all the vices, and they grow even in the shallowest ground.

Anne Lisbeth now experienced all the thoughts we have clothed in words. She was overpowered by them, and sank down, and crept along for some distance on the ground. "A grave! dig me a grave!" It sounded again in her ears; and she would gladly have buried herself if in the grave there had been forgetfulness of every deed. It was the first hour of her awakening, full of anguish and horror. Superstition alternately made her shudder with cold and made her blood burn with

the heat of fever. Many things of which she had never liked to speak came into her mind. Silent as the cloud shadows in the bright moonshine, a spectral apparition flitted by her: she had heard of it before. Close by her gallopped four snorting steeds, with fire spurting from their eyes and nostrils; they dragged a red-hot coach, and within it sat the wicked proprietor who had ruled here a hundred years ago. The legend said that every night at twelve o'clock he drove into his castle yard and out again. There! there! He was not pale as dead men are said to be, but black as a coal. He nodded at Anne Lisbeth and beckoned to her. "Hold fast! hold fast! then you may ride again in a nobleman's carriage, and forget your own child!"

She gathered herself up, and hastened to the churchyard; but the black crosses and the black ravens danced before her eyes, and she could not distinguish one from the other. The ravens croaked, as the raven had done that she saw in the day-time, but now she understood what they said. "I am the raven-mother! I am the raven-mother!" each raven croaked; and Anne Lisbeth now understood that the name also applied to her, and she fancied she should be transformed into a black bird, and

be obliged to cry what they cried, if she did not dig the grave.

And she threw herself on the earth, and with her hands dug a grave in the hard ground, so that the blood ran from her fingers.

"A grave! dig me a grave!" it still sounded. She was fearful that the cock might crow, and the first red streak appear in the east, before she had finished her work, and then she would be lost.

And the cock crowed, and day dawned in the east, and the grave was only half dug. An icy hand passed over her head and face and down towards her heart. "Only half a grave!" a voice wailed, and fled away. Yes, it fled away over the sea—it was the ocean spectre; and exhausted and overpowered, Anne Lisbeth sunk to the ground, and her senses forsook her.

It was bright day when she came to herself, and two men were raising her up; but she was not lying in the churchyard, but on the sea shore, where she had dug a deep hole in the sand, and cut her hand against a broken glass, whose sharp stem was stuck in a little painted block of wood. Anne Lisbeth was in a fever. Conscience had shuffled the cards of superstition, and had laid out these cards, and she fancied she had only half a

Anne Lisbeth found on the sea shore.

soul, and that her child had taken the other half down into the sea. Never would she be able to swing herself aloft to the mercy of Heaven till she had recovered this other half, which was now

held fast in the deep water. Anne Lisbeth got back to her former home, but was no longer the woman she had been: her thoughts were confused like a tangled skein; only one thread, only one thought she had disentangled, namely, that she must carry the spectre of the sea shore to the churchyard, and dig a grave for him, that thus she might win back her soul.

Many a night she was missed from her home; and she was always found on the sea shore, waiting for the spectre. In this way a whole year passed by; and then one night she vanished again, and was not to be found; the whole of the next day was wasted in fruitless search.

Towards evening, when the clerk came into the church to toll the vesper bell, he saw by the altar Anne Lisbeth, who had spent the whole day there. Her physical forces were almost exhausted, but her eyes gleamed brightly and her cheeks had a rosy flush. The last rays of the sun shone upon her, and gleamed over the altar on the bright buckles of the Bible which lay there, opened at the words of the prophet Joel: "Rend your hearts, and not your garments, and turn unto the Lord!" That was just a chance, the people said, as many things happen by chance.

In the face of Anne Lisbeth, illumined by the sun, peace and rest were to be seen. She said she was happy, for now she had conquered. Last night the spectre of the shore, her own child, had come to her, and had said to her,

"Thou hast dug me only half a grave, but thou hast now, for a year and a day, buried me altogether in thy heart, and it is there that a mother can best hide her child!"

And then he gave her her lost soul back again, and brought her here into the church.

"Now I am in the house of God," she said, "and in that house we are happy."

And when the sun had set, Anne Lisbeth's soul had risen to that region where there is no more anguish, and Anne Lisbeth's troubles were over.

THE BELL-DEEP.

DING-DONG! ding-dong! It sounds up from the "Bell-Deep," in the Odense-Au. Every child in the old town of Odense, on the island of Fünen, knows the Au, which washes the gardens round about the town, and flows on under the wooden bridges from the dam to the water-mill. In the Au grow the yellow water-lilies and brown feathery reeds; the dark velvety flag grows there, high and thick; old decayed willows, slanting and tottering, hang far out over the stream beside the monks' meadow and by the bleaching ground; but opposite there are gardens upon gardens, each different from the rest, some with pretty flowers and bowers like little dolls' pleasure grounds, often displaying only cabbage and other kitchen plants; and here and there the gardens cannot be seen at all, for the great elder trees that spread themselves out by the bank, and hang far

out over the streaming waters, which are deeper here and there than an oar can fathom. Opposite the old nunnery is the deepest place, which is called the "Bell-Deep," and there dwells the old water spirit, the "Au-mann." This spirit sleeps through the day while the sun shines down upon the water; but in starry and moonlit nights he shows himself. He is very old: grandmother says that she has heard her own grandmother tell of him; he is said to lead a solitary life, and to have nobody with whom he can converse save the great old church Bell. Once the Bell hung in the church tower; but now there is no trace left of the tower or of the church, which was called St. Alban's.

"Ding-dong! ding-dong!" sounded the Bell, when the tower still stood there; and one evening, while the sun was setting and the Bell was swinging away bravely, it broke loose and came flying down through the air, the brilliant metal shining in the ruddy beam.

"Ding-dong! ding-dong! Now I'll retire to rest!" sang the Bell, and flew down into the Odense-Au where it is deepest; and that is why the place is called the "Bell-Deep."

But the Bell got neither rest nor sleep. Down in the Au-mann's haunt it sounds and rings, so

that the tones sometimes pierce upward through the waters; and many people maintain that its strains forebode the death of some one; but that is not true, for then the Bell is only talking with the Au-mann, who is now no longer alone.

And what is the Bell telling? It is old, very old, as we have already observed; it was there long before grandmother's grandmother was born; and yet it is but a child in comparison with the Au-mann, who is an old quiet personage, an oddity, with his hose of eel-skin, and his scaly jacket with the yellow lilies for buttons, and a wreath of reed in his hair, and seaweed in his beard; but he looks very pretty for all that.

What the Bell tells? To repeat it all would require years and days; for year by year it is telling the old stories, sometimes short ones, sometimes long ones, according to its whim; it tells of old times, of the dark hard times, thus:

"In the church of St. Alban, the monk mounted up into the tower. He was young and handsome, but thoughtful exceedingly. He looked through the loophole out upon the Odense-Au, when the bed of the water was yet broad and the monks' meadow was still a lake: he looked out over it, and over the rampart, and over to the nuns' hill

The Au-Mann listening to the Bell.

opposite, where the convent stood, and the light gleamed forth from the nun's cell; he had known the nun right well, and he thought of her, and his heart beat quicker as he thought. Ding-dong! ding-dong!"

Yes, this was the story the Bell told.

"Into the tower came also the dapper man-servant of the bishop; and when I, the Bell, who am made of metal, rang hard and loud, and swung

to and fro, I might have beaten out his brains. He sat down close under me, and played with two little sticks as if they had been a stringed instrument; and he sang to it.

"'Now I may sing it out loud, though at other times I may not whisper it. I may sing of everything that is kept concealed behind lock and bars. Yonder it is cold and wet. The rats are eating her up alive! Nobody knows of it! Nobody hears of it! Not even now, for the bell is ringing and singing its loud Ding-dong! ding-dong!'

"There was a King in those days; they called him Canute. He bowed himself before bishop and monk; but when he offended the free peasants with heavy taxes and hard words, they seized their weapons and put him to flight like a wild beast. He sought shelter in the church, and shut gate and door behind him. The violent band surrounded the church; I heard tell of it. The crows, ravens, and magpies started up in terror at the yelling and shouting that sounded around. They flew into the tower and out again, they looked down upon the throng below, and they also looked into the windows of the church, and screamed out aloud what they saw there. King Canute knelt before the altar in prayer, his brothers Eric and

Benedict stood by him as a guard with drawn swords; but the King's servant, the treacherous Blake, betrayed his master; the throng in front of the church knew where they could hit the King, and one of them flung a stone through a pane of glass, and the King lay there dead! The cries and screams of the savage horde and of the birds sounded through the air, and I joined in it also; for I sang 'Ding-dong! ding-dong!'

"The church bell hangs high and looks far around, and sees the birds around it, and understands their language; the wind roars in upon it through windows and loopholes; and the wind knows everything, for he gets it from the air, which encircles all things, and the church bell understands his tongue, and rings it out into the world, 'Ding-dong! ding-dong!'

"But it was too much for me to hear and to know; I was not able any longer to ring it out. I became so tired, so heavy, that the beam broke, and I flew out into the gleaming Au where the water is deepest, and where the Au-mann lives, solitary and alone; and year by year I tell him what I have heard and what I know. Ding-dong! ding-dong!"

Thus it sounds complainingly out of the Bell-

Deep in the Odense-Au: that is what grandmother told us.

But the schoolmaster says that there was not any bell that rung down there, for that it could not do so; and that no Au-mann dwelt yonder, for there was no Au-mann at all! And when all the other church bells are sounding sweetly, he says that it is not really the bells that are sounding, but that it is the air itself which sends forth the notes; and grandmother said to us that the Bell itself said it was the air who told it him, consequently they are agreed on that point, and this much is sure.

"Be cautious, cautious, and take good heed to thyself," they both say.

The air knows everything. It is around us, it is in us, it talks of our thoughts and of our deeds, and it speaks longer of them than does the Bell down in the depths of the Odense-Au where the Au-mann dwells; it rings it out into the vault of heaven, far, far out, for ever and ever, till the heaven bells sound "Ding-dong! ding-dong!"

THE STONE OF THE WISE MEN.

FAR away in the land of India, far away towards the East, at the end of the world, stood the Tree of the Sun, a noble tree, such as we have never seen and shall probably never see. The crown stretched out several miles around: it was really an entire wood; each of its smallest branches formed, in its turn, a whole tree. Palms, beech trees, pines, plane trees, and various other kinds grew here, which are found scattered in all other parts of the world: they shot out like small branches from the great boughs, and these large boughs with their windings and knots formed, as it were, valleys and hills, clothed with velvety green and covered with flowers. Everything was like a wide, blooming meadow, or like the most charming garden. Here the birds from all quarters of the world assembled together—birds from the primeval forests of America, the rose gardens of Damascus, from the deserts of Africa, in which

the elephant and the lion boast of being the only rulers. The Polar birds came flying hither, and of course the stork and the swallow were not absent; but the birds were not the only living beings: the stag, the squirrel, the antelope, and a hundred other beautiful and light-footed animals were here at home. The crown of the tree was a wide-spread fragrant garden, and in the midst of it, where the great boughs raised themselves into a green hill, there stood a castle of crystal, with a view towards every quarter of heaven. Each tower was reared in the form of a lily. Through the stem one could ascend, for within it was a winding stair; one could step out upon the leaves as upon balconies; and up in the calyx of the flower itself was the most beautiful, sparkling round hall, above which no other roof rose but the blue firmament with sun and stars.

Just as much splendour, though in another way, appeared below, in the wide halls of the castle. Here, on the walls, the whole world around was reflected. One saw everything that was done, so that there was no necessity of reading any papers, and indeed newspapers were not obtainable here. Everything was to be seen in living pictures, if one only wished to see it; for too much is still too

much even for the wisest man; and this man dwelt here. His name is very difficult—you will not be able to pronounce it, and therefore it may remain unmentioned. He knew everything that a man upon earth can know or can get to know; every invention which had already been or which was yet to be made was known to him; but nothing more, for everything in the world has its limits. The wise King Solomon was only half as wise as he, and yet he was very wise, and governed the powers of nature, and held sway over potent spirits: yes, Death itself was obliged to give him every morning a list of those who were to die during the day. But King Solomon himself was obliged to die too; and this thought it was which often in the deepest manner employed the inquirer, the mighty lord in the castle on the Tree of the Sun. He also, however high he might tower above men in wisdom, must die one day. He knew that he and his children also must fade away like the leaves of the forest, and become dust. He saw the human race fade away like the leaves on the tree; saw new men come to fill their places; but the leaves that fell off never sprouted forth again —they fell to dust, or were transformed into other parts of plants.

"What happens to man?" the wise man asked himself, "when the angel of death touches him? What may death be? The body is dissolved. And the soul? Yes, what is the soul? whither doth it go? To eternal life, says the comforting voice of religion; but what is the transition? where does one live, and how? Above, in heaven, says the pious man; thither we go. Thither?" repeated the wise man, and fixed his eyes upon the moon and the stars; "up yonder?"

But he saw, from the earthly ball, that above and below were alike changing their position, according as one stood here or there on the rolling globe; and even if he mounted as high as the loftiest mountains of earth rear their heads, to the air which we below call clear and transparent—the pure heaven—a black darkness spread abroad like a cloth, and the sun had a coppery glow and sent forth no rays, and our earth lay wrapped in an orange-coloured mist. How narrow were the limits of the corporeal eye, and how little the eye of the soul could see!—how little did even the wisest know of that which is the most important to us all!

In the most secret chamber of the castle lay the greatest treasure of the earth: the Book of Truth. Leaf for leaf, the wise man read it through: every

The Book of Truth.

man may read in this book, but only by fragments. To many an eye the characters seem to tremble, so that the words cannot be put together, and on certain pages the writing often seems so pale, so

blurred, that only a blank leaf appears. The wiser a man becomes, the more he will read; and the wisest read most. He knew how to unite the sunlight and the moonlight with the light of reason and of hidden powers; and through this stronger light many things came clearly before him from the page. But in the division of the book whose title is "Life after Death" not even one point was to be distinctly seen. That pained him. Should he not be able here upon earth to obtain a light by which everything should become clear to him that stood written in the Book of Truth?

Like the wise King Solomon, he understood the language of the animals, and could interpret their talk and their songs. But that made him none the wiser. He found out the forces of plants and metals—the forces to be used for the cure of diseases, for delaying death—but none that could destroy death. In all created things that were within his reach he sought the light that should shine upon the certainty of an eternal life; but he found it not. The Book of Truth lay before him with leaves that appeared blank. Christianity showed itself to him in the Bible with words of promise of eternal life; but he wanted to read it in *his* book; but here he saw nothing written on the subject.

He had five children—four sons, educated as well as the children of the wisest father could be, and a daughter, fair, mild, and clever, but blind; yet this appeared no deprivation to her—her father and brothers were outward eyes to her, and the vividness of her feelings saw for her.

Never had the sons gone farther from the castle than the branches of the tree extended, nor had the sister strayed from home. They were happy children in the land of childhood—in the beautiful fragrant Tree of the Sun. Like all children, they were very glad when any history was related to them; and the father told them many things that other children would not have understood; but these were just as clever as most grown-up people are among us. He explained to them what they saw in the pictures of life on the castle walls—the doings of men and the march of events in all the lands of the earth; and often the sons expressed the wish that they could be present at all the great deeds and take part in them; and their father then told them that out in the world it was difficult and toilsome—that the world was not quite what it appeared to them as they looked forth upon it from their beauteous home. He spoke to them of the true, the beautiful, and the good, and told

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them that these three held together in the world, and that under the pressure they had to endure they became hardened into a precious stone, clearer than the water of the diamond — a jewel whose splendour had value with God, whose brightness outshone everything, and which was the so-called "Stone of the Wise." He told them how men could attain by investigation to the knowledge of the existence of God, and that through men themselves one could attain to the certainty that such a jewel as the "Stone of the Wise" existed. This narration would have exceeded the perception of other children, but these children understood it, and at length other children, too, will learn to comprehend its meaning.

They questioned their father concerning the true, the beautiful, and the good; and he explained it to them, told them many things, and told them also that God, when He made man out of the dust of the earth, gave five kisses to His work—fiery kisses, heart kisses—which we now call the five senses. Through these the true, the beautiful, and the good is seen, perceived, and understood; and through these it is valued, protected, and furthered. Five senses have been given corporeally and mentally, inwardly and outwardly, to body and soul.

The children reflected deeply upon these things; they meditated upon them by day and by night. Then the eldest of the brothers dreamed a splendid dream. Strangely enough, the second brother had the same dream, and the third, and the fourth brother likewise; all of them dreamed exactly the same thing—namely, that each went out into the world and found the "Stone of the Wise," which gleamed like a beaming light on his forehead when, in the morning dawn, he rode back on his swift horse over the velvety green meadows of his home into the castle of his father; and the jewel threw such a heavenly light and radiance upon the leaves of the book, that everything was illuminated that stood written concerning the life beyond the grave. But the sister dreamed nothing about going out into the wide world: it never entered her mind. Her world was her father's house.

"I shall ride forth into the wide world," said the eldest brother. "I must try what life is like there, and go to and fro among men. I will practise only the good and the true; with these I will protect the beautiful. Much shall change for the better when I am there."

Now his thoughts were bold and great, as our thoughts generally are at home, before we have

gone forth into the world and have encountered wind and rain, and thorns and thistles.

In him and in all his brothers the five senses were highly developed, inwardly and outwardly; but each of them had *one* sense which in keenness and development surpassed the other four. In the case of the eldest this pre-eminent sense was Sight. This was to do him especial service. He said he had eyes for all time, eyes for all nations, eyes that could look into the depths of the earth, where the treasures lie hidden, and deep into the hearts of men, as though nothing but a pane of glass were placed before them: he could read more than we can see upon the cheek that blushes or grows pale, in the eye that droops or smiles. Stags and antelopes escorted him to the boundary of his home towards the west, and there the wild swans received him and flew north-west. He followed them. And now he had gone far out into the world—far from the land of his father, that extended eastward to the end of the earth.

But how he opened his eyes in astonishment! Many things were here to be seen; and many things appear very different when a man beholds them with his own eyes, or when he merely sees them in a picture, as the son had done in his

father's house, however faithful the picture may be. At the outset he very nearly lost his eyes in astonishment at all the rubbish and all the masquerading stuff put forward to represent the beautiful; but he did not lose them, and soon found full employment for them. He wished to go thoroughly and honestly to work in the understanding of the beautiful, the true, and the good. But how were these represented in the world? He saw that often the garland that belonged to the beautiful was given to the hideous; that the good was often passed by without notice, while mediocrity was applauded when it should have been hissed off. People looked to the dress, and not to the wearer; asked for a name, and not for desert; and went more by reputation than by service. It was the same thing everywhere.

"I see I must attack these things vigorously," he said; and attacked them with vigour accordingly.

But while he was looking for the truth, came the Evil One, the father of lies. Gladly would the fiend have plucked out the eyes of this Seer; but that would have been too direct: the devil works in a more cunning way. He let him see and seek the true and the good; but while the

young man was contemplating them, the Evil Spirit blew one mote after another into each of his eyes; and such a proceeding would be hurtful even to the best sight. Then the fiend blew upon the motes, so that they became beams; and the eyes

The end of the first Brother's search.

were destroyed, and the Seer stood like a blind man in the wide world, and had no faith in it: he lost his good opinion of it and himself; and when a man gives up the world and himself, all is over with him.

"Over!" said the wild swan, who flew across the sea towards the east. "Over!" twittered the swallows, who likewise flew eastward, towards the

Tree of the Sun. That was no good news that they carried to the young man's home.

"I fancy the *Seer* must have fared badly," said the second brother; "but the *Hearer* may have better fortune."

For this one possessed the sense of hearing in an eminent degree: he could hear the grass grow, so quick was he to hear.

He took a hearty leave of all at home, and rode away, provided with good abilities and good intentions. The swallows escorted him, and he followed the swans; and he stood far from his home in the wide world.

But he experienced the fact that one may have too much of a good thing. His hearing was *too* fine. He not only heard the grass grow, but could hear every man's heart beat, in sorrow and in joy. The whole world was to him like a great clock-maker's workshop, wherein all the clocks were going "tick, tick!" and all the turret clocks striking "ding-dong!" It was unbearable. For a long time his ears held out, but at last all the noise and screaming became too much for one man. There came blackguard boys of sixty years old—for years alone don't make men—and raised a tumult at which the Hearer might certainly have

laughed, but for the applause which followed, and which echoed through every house and street, and was audible even in the country high road. Falsehood thrust itself forward and played the master; the bells on the fool's cap jangled and declared they were church bells; and the noise became too bad for the Hearer, and he thrust his fingers into his ears; but still he could hear false singing and bad sounds, gossip and idle words, scandal and slander, groaning and moaning without and within. Heaven help us! He thrust his fingers deeper and deeper into his ears, but at last the drums burst. Now he could hear nothing at all of the good, the true, and the beautiful, for his hearing was to have been the bridge by which he crossed. He became silent and suspicious, trusted no one at last, not even himself, and, no longer hoping to find and bring home the costly jewel, he gave it up, and gave himself up; and that was the worst of all. The birds who winged their flight towards the east brought tidings of this, till the news reached the castle in the Tree of the Sun.

"*I* will try now!" said the third brother. "I have a sharp *nose!*"

Now, that was not said in very good taste; but it was his way, and one must take him as he was.

He had a happy temper, and was a poet, a real poet: he could sing many things that he could not say, and many things struck him far earlier than they occurred to others. "I can smell fire!" he said; and he attributed to the sense of smelling, which he possessed in a high degree, a great power in the region of the beautiful.

"Every fragrant spot in the realm of the beautiful has its frequenters," he said. "One man feels at home in the atmosphere of the tavern, among the flaring tallow candles, where the smell of spirits mingles with the fumes of bad tobacco. Another prefers sitting among the overpowering scent of jessamine, or scenting himself with strong clove oil. This man seeks out the fresh sea breeze, while that one climbs to the highest mountain-top and looks down upon the busy little life beneath."

Thus he spake. It seemed to him as if he had already been out in the world, as if he had already associated with men and known them. But this experience arose from within himself: it was the poet within him, the gift of Heaven, and bestowed on him in his cradle.

He bade farewell to his paternal roof in the Tree of the Sun, and departed on foot through the pleasant scenery of home. Arrived at its confines,

he mounted on the back of an ostrich, which runs faster than a horse; and afterwards, when he fell in with the wild swans, he swung himself on the strongest of them, for he loved change; and away he flew over the sea to distant lands with great forests, deep lakes, mighty mountains, and proud cities; and wherever he came it seemed as if sunshine travelled with him across the fields, for every flower, every bush, every tree exhaled a new fragrance, in the consciousness that a friend and protector was in the neighbourhood, who understood them and knew their value. The crippled rose bush reared up its twigs, unfolded its leaves, and bore the most beautiful roses; every one could see it, and even the black damp Wood Snail noticed its beauty.

"I will give my seal to the flower," said the Snail; "I have spit at it, and I can do no more for it."

"Thus it always fares with the beautiful in this world!" said the poet.

And he sang a song concerning it, sang it in his own way; but nobody listened. Then he gave the drummer twopence and a peacock's feather, and set the song for the drum, and had it drummed in all the streets of the town; and the people heard it,

The departure of the third Brother.

and said, "That's a well-constructed song." Then the poet sang several songs of the beautiful, the true, and the good. His songs were listened to in the tavern, where the tallow candles smoked, in the

fresh meadow, in the forest, and on the high seas. It appeared as if this brother was to have better fortune than the two others. But the Evil Spirit was angry at this, and accordingly he set to work with incense powder and incense smoke, which he can prepare so artfully as to confuse an angel, and how much more therefore a poor poet! The Evil One knows how to take that kind of people! He surrounded the poet so completely with incense, that the man lost his head, and forgot his mission and his home, and at last himself—and ended in smoke.

But when the little birds heard of this they mourned, and for three days they sang not one song. The black Wood Snail became blacker still, not for grief, but for envy.

"They should have strewed incense for me," she said, "for it was I who gave him his idea of the most famous of his songs, the drum song of 'The Way of the World.' It was I who spat at the rose! I can bring witness to the fact."

But no tidings of all this penetrated into the poet's home in India, for all the birds were silent for three days; and when the time of mourning was over, their grief had been so deep that they had forgotten for whom they wept. That's the usual way!

"Now I shall have to go out into the world, to disappear like the rest," said the fourth brother.

He had just as good a wit as the third, but he was no poet, though he could be witty. Those two had filled the castle with cheerfulness, and now the last cheerfulness was going away. Sight and hearing have always been looked upon as the two chief senses of men, and as the two that it is most desirable to sharpen; the other senses are looked upon as of less consequence. But that was not the opinion of this son, as he had especially cultivated his *taste* in every respect, and taste is very powerful. It holds sway over what goes into the mouth, and also over what penetrates into the mind; and consequently this brother tasted everything that was stored up in bottles and pots, saying that this was the rough work of his office. Every man was to him a vessel in which something was seething, every country an enormous kitchen, a kitchen of the mind.

"That is no delicacy," he said; and he wanted to go out and try what was delicate. "Perhaps fortune may be more favourable to me than it was to my brothers," he said. "I shall start on my travels. But what conveyance shall I choose? Are air balloons invented yet?" he asked of his

father, who knew of all inventions that had been made or that were to be made. But air balloons had not yet been invented, nor steam ships, nor railways. "Good: then I shall choose an air balloon," he said; "my father knows how they are made and guided. Nobody has invented them yet, and consequently the people will believe that it is an aërial phantom. When I have used the balloon I will burn it, and for this purpose you must give me a few pieces of the invention that will be made next—I mean chemical matches."

And so he obtained what he wanted, and flew away. The birds accompanied him farther than they had flown with the other brothers. They were curious to know what would be the result of the flight, and more of them came sweeping up: they thought he was some new bird; and he soon had a goodly following. The air became black with birds, they came on like a cloud—like the cloud of locusts over the land of Egypt.

Now he was out in the wide world.

The balloon descended over one of the greatest cities, and the aëronaut took up his station on the highest point, on the church steeple. The balloon rose again, which it ought not to have done: where it went to is not known, but that was not a matter

of consequence, for it was not yet invented. Then he sat on the church steeple. The birds no longer hovered around him, they had got tired of him, and he was tired of them.

All the chimneys in the town were smoking merrily.

"Those are altars erected to thy honour!" said the Wind, who wished to say something agreeable to him.

He sat boldly up there, and looked down upon the people in the street. There was one stepping along, proud of his purse, another of the key he carried at his girdle, though he had nothing to unlock; one proud of his moth-eaten coat, another of his wasted body.

"Vanity! I must hasten downward, and dip my finger in the pot, and taste! But for awhile I will still sit here, for the wind blows so pleasantly against my back. I'll sit here as long as the wind blows. I'll enjoy a slight rest. 'It is good to sleep long in the morning, when one has much to do,' says the lazy man. I'll stop here as long as this wind blows, for it pleases me."

And there he sat, but he was sitting upon the weathercock of the steeple, which kept turning round and round with him, so that he was under

the false impression that the same wind still blew; so he might stay up there a goodly while.

But in India, in the castle in the Tree of the Sun, it was solitary and still, since the brothers had gone away one after the other.

"It goes not well with them," said the father; "they will never bring the gleaming jewel home; it is not made for me: they are gone! they are dead!"

And he bent down over the Book of Truth, and gazed at the page on which he should read of life after death; but for him nothing was to be seen or learned upon it.

The blind daughter was his consolation and joy; she attached herself with sincere affection to him: for the sake of his peace and joy she wished the costly jewel might be found and brought home. With kindly longing she thought of her brothers. Where were they? Where did they live? She wished sincerely that she might dream of them, but it was strange, not even in dreams could she approach them. But at length, one night she dreamed that the voices of her brothers sounded across to her, calling to her from the wide world, and she could not refrain, but went far far out, and yet it seemed in her dream that she was still in

her father's house. She did not meet her brothers, but she felt, as it were, a fire burning in her hand, but it did not hurt her, for it was the jewel she was bringing to her father. When she awoke, she thought for a moment that she still held the stone, but it was the knob of her distaff that she was grasping. During the long nights she had spun incessantly, and round the distaff was turned a thread, finer than the finest web of the spider; human eyes were unable to distinguish the separate threads. She had wetted them with her tears, and the twist was strong as a cable. She rose, and her resolution was taken: the dream must be made a reality. It was night, and her father slept. She pressed a kiss on his hand, and took her distaff, and fastened the end of the thread to her father's house. But for this, blind as she was, she would never have found her way home; to the thread she must hold fast, and trust not to herself or to others. From the Tree of the Sun she broke four leaves; these she would confide to wind and weather, that they might fly to her brothers as a letter and a greeting, in case she did not meet them in the wide world. How would she fare out yonder, she, the poor blind child? But she had the invisible thread to which she could hold fast.

She possessed a gift which all the others lacked. This was *thoroughness;* and in virtue of this it seemed as if she could see to the tips of her fingers and hear down into her very heart.

And quietly she went forth into the noisy, whirling, wonderful world, and wherever she went the sky grew bright—she felt the warm ray—the rainbow spread itself out from the dark world through the blue air. She heard the song of the birds, and smelt the scent of orange groves and apple orchards so strongly that she seemed to taste it. Soft tones and charming songs reached her ear, but also howling and roaring, and thoughts and opinions sounded in strange contradiction to each other. Into the innermost depths of her heart penetrated the echoes of human thoughts and feelings. One chorus sounded darkly—

> "The life of earth is a shadow vain,
> A night created for sorrow!"

but then came another strain—

> "The life of earth is the scent of the rose,
> With its sunshine and its pleasure."

And if one strophe sounded painfully—

> "Each mortal thinks of himself alone,
> This truth has been manifested"—

on the other side the answer pealed forth—

"A mighty stream of warmest love,
All through the world shall guide us."

She heard, indeed, the words—

"In the little petty whirl here below,
Each thing shows mean and paltry;"

but then came also the comfort—

"Many things great and good are achieved
That the ear of man heareth never."

And if sometimes the mocking strain sounded around her—

"Join in the common cry; with a jest
Destroy the good gifts of the Giver,"

in the blind girl's heart a stronger voice repeated—

"To trust in thyself and in God is best;
His good will be done for ever."

And whenever she entered the circle of human kind, and appeared among young or old, the knowledge of the true, the good, and the beautiful beamed into their hearts. Whether she entered the study of the artist, or the festive, decorated hall, or the crowded factory, with its whirring wheels, it seemed as though a sunbeam were stealing in—as if the sweet string sounded, the flower exhaled its perfume, and a living dew-drop fell upon the exhausted blood.

But the Evil Spirit could not see this and be content. He has more cunning than ten thousand men, and he found out a way to compass his end. He betook himself to the marsh, collected little bubbles of the stagnant water, and passed over them a sevenfold echo of lying words to give them strength. Then he pounded up paid-for heroic poems and lying epitaphs, as many as he could get, boiled them in tears that envy had shed, put upon them rouge he had scraped from faded cheeks, and of these he composed a maiden, with the aspect and gait of the blessed blind girl, the angel of thoroughness; and then the Evil One's plot was in full progress. The world knew not which of the two was the true one; and, indeed, how should the world know?

> "To trust in thyself and in God is best;
> His good will be done for ever,"

sang the blind girl, in full faith. She intrusted the four green leaves from the Tree of the Sun to the winds, as a letter and greeting to her brothers, and had full confidence that they would reach their destination, and that the jewel would be found which outshines all the glories of the world. From the forehead of humanity it would gleam even to the castle of her father.

The Blind Girl's messengers.

"Even to my father's house," she repeated. "Yes, the place of the jewel is on earth, and I shall bring more than the promise of it with me. I feel its glow, it swells more and more in my

closed hand. Every grain of truth, were it never so fine, which the sharp wind carried up and whirled towards me, I took up and treasured; I let it be penetrated by the fragrance of the beautiful, of which there is so much in the world, even for the blind. I took the sound of the beating heart engaged in what is good, and added it to the first. All that I bring is but dust, but still it is the dust of the jewel we seek, and in plenty. I have my whole hand full of it."

And she stretched forth her hand towards her father. She was soon at home—she had travelled thither in the flight of thoughts, never having quitted her hold of the invisible thread from the paternal home.

The evil powers rushed with hurricane fury over the Tree of the Sun, pressed with a wind-blast against the open doors, and into the sanctuary where lay the Book of Truth.

"It will be blown away by the wind!" said the father, and he seized the hand she had opened.

"No," she replied, with quiet confidence, "it cannot be blown away; I feel the beam warming my very soul."

And the father became aware of a glancing flame, there where the shining dust poured out of

her hand over the Book of Truth, that was to tell of the certainty of an everlasting life; and on it stood one shining word—one only word—"BELIEVE."

And with the father and daughter were again the four brothers. When the green leaf fell upon the bosom of each, a longing for home had seized them and led them back. They had arrived. The birds of passage, and the stag, the antelope, and all the creatures of the forest followed them, for all wished to have a part in their joy.

We have often seen, where a sunbeam bursts through a crack in the door into the dusty room, how a whirling column of dust seems circling round; but this was not poor and insignificant like common dust, for even the rainbow is dead in colour compared with the beauty which showed itself. Thus, from the leaf of the book with the beaming word "*Believe,*" arose every grain of truth, decked with the charms of *the beautiful* and *the good,* burning brighter than the mighty pillar of flame that led Moses and the children of Israel through the desert; and from the word "*Believe*" the bridge of *Hope* arose, spanning the distance, even to the immeasurable love in the realms of the Infinite.

THE PSYCHE.

IN the fresh morning dawn, in the rosy air, gleams a great Star, the brightest Star of the morning. His rays tremble on the white wall, as if he wished to write down on it what he can tell, what he has seen there and elsewhere, during thousands of years in our rolling world. Let us hear one of his stories.

"A short time ago"—the Star's "short time ago" is called among us "centuries ago"—"my rays followed a young artist. It was in the city of the Popes, in the world-city Rome. Much has been changed there in the course of time, but the changes have not come so quickly as the change from youth to old age. Then already the palace of the Cæsars was a ruin, as it is now; fig trees and laurels grew among the fallen marble columns and in the desolate bathing-halls, where the gilding still clings to the walls; the Coliseum was a

gigantic ruin; the church bells sounded, the incense sent up its fragrant cloud, and through the streets marched processions with flaming tapers and glowing canopies. Holy Church was there, and art was held as a high and holy thing. In Rome lived the greatest painter in the world, Raphael; there dwelt also the first of sculptors, Michael Angelo. Even the Pope paid homage to these two, and honoured them with a visit: art was recognized and honoured, and was rewarded also. But, for all that, everything great and splendid was not seen and known.

"In a narrow lane stood an old house. Once it had been a temple; a young sculptor now dwelt there. He was young and he was unknown. He certainly had friends—young artists like himself, young in spirit, young in hopes and thoughts. They told him he was rich in talent, and an artist, but that he was foolish for having no faith in his own power; for he always broke what he fashioned out of clay, and never completed anything—and a work must be completed if it is to be seen and to bring money.

"'You are a dreamer,' they went on to say to him; 'and that's your misfortune. But the re[illegible] of this is, that you have never lived,

never tasted life, you have never enjoyed it in great wholesome draughts, as it ought to have been enjoyed. In youth one must mingle one's own personality with life, that they may become one. Look at the great master Raphael, whom the Pope honours and the world admires—he's no despiser of wine and bread.'

"'And he even appreciates the baker's daughter, the pretty *Fornarina*," added Angelo, one of the merriest of the young friends.

"Yes, they said a good many things of the kind, according to their age and their reason. They wanted to draw the young artist out with them into the merry wild life, the mad life as it might also be called; and at certain times he felt an inclination for it. He had warm blood, a strong imagination, and could take part in the merry chat, and laugh aloud with the rest; but what they called 'Raphael's merry life' disappeared before him like a vapour when he saw the divine radiance that beamed forth from the pictures of the great master; and when he stood in the Vatican, before the forms of beauty which the old masters had hewn out of marble thousands of years since, his breast swelled, and he felt within himself something high, someing still lv, something elevating, great, and good,

The Roman Garden.

and he wished that he could produce similar forms from the blocks of marble. He wished to make a picture of that which was within him, striving upward from his heart to the realms of the infinite; but how, and in what form? The soft clay was fashioned under his fingers into forms of beauty, but the next day he broke what he had fashioned, according to his wont.

"One day he walked past one of those rich palaces of which Rome has many to show. He stopped before the great open portal, and beheld a garden surrounded by cloistered walks. The garden bloomed with a goodly show of the fairest roses, and great white lilies with green juicy leaves shot upward from the marble basin in which the clear water was splashing; and a form glided past, the daughter of the princely house—graceful, delicate, and wonderfully fair. Such a model of female loveliness he had never yet beheld—yet, stay: he had seen it, painted by Raphael, painted as a Psyche, in one of the Roman palaces. Yes, there it had been painted; but here it passed by him in living reality.

"The remembrance lived in his thoughts, in his heart. He went home to his humble room, and modelled a Psyche of clay—it was the rich young

Roman girl, the noble maiden; and for the first time he looked at his work with satisfaction. It had a meaning for him, for it was *she*. And the friends who saw his work shouted aloud for joy; they declared that this work was a manifestation of his artistic power, of which they had long been aware, and that now the world should be made aware of it too.

"The clay figure was lifelike and beautiful, but it had not the whiteness or the durability of marble; so they declared that the Psyche must henceforth live in marble. He already possessed a costly block of that stone. It had been lying for years, the property of his parents, in the courtyard. Fragments of glass, climbing weeds, and remains of artichokes had gathered about it and sullied its purity; but under the surface the block was as white as the mountain snow; and from this block the Psyche was to arise."

Now, it happened one morning — the bright Star tells nothing about this, but we know it occurred—that a noble Roman company came into the narrow lane. The carriage stopped at the top of the lane, and the company proceeded on foot towards the house, to inspect the young sculptor's work, for they had heard him spoken of by chance.

And who were these distinguished guests? Poor young man! or fortunate young man he might be called. The noble young lady stood in the room, and smiled radiantly when her father said to her, "It is your living image." That smile could not be copied, any more than the look could be reproduced, the wonderful look which she cast upon the young artist. It was a fiery look, that seemed at once to elevate and to crush him.

"The Psyche must be executed in marble," said the wealthy patrician. And those were words of life for the dead clay and the heavy block of marble, and words of life likewise for the deeply-moved artist. "When the work is finished I will purchase it," continued the rich noble.

A new era seemed to have arisen in the poor studio. Life and cheerfulness gleamed there, and busy industry plied its work. The beaming Morning Star beheld how the work progressed. The clay itself seemed inspired since *she* had been there, and moulded itself, in heightened beauty, to a likeness of the well-known features.

"Now I know what life is," cried the artist, rejoicingly; "it is Love! It is the lofty abandonment of self for the dawning of the beautiful in the soul! What my friends call life and enjoy-

ment is a passing shadow; it is like bubbles among seething dregs, not the pure heavenly wine that consecrate us to life."

The marble block was reared in its place. The chisel struck great fragments from it; the measurements were taken, points and lines were made, the mechanical part was executed, till gradually the stone assumed a human female form, a shape of beauty, and became converted into the Psyche, fair and glorious—a divine being in human shape. The heavy stone appeared as a gliding, dancing, airy Psyche, with the heavenly innocent smile—the smile that had mirrored itself in the soul of the young artist.

The Star of the roseate dawn beheld and understood what was stirring within the young man, and could read the meaning of the changing colour of his cheek, of the light that flashed from his eye, as he stood busily working, reproducing what had been put into his soul from above.

"Thou art a master like those masters among the ancient Greeks," exclaimed his delighted friends: "soon shall the whole world admire thy Psyche."

"*My* Psyche!" he repeated. "Yes, mine. She must be mine. I, too, am an artist, like those

great men who are gone. Providence has granted me the boon, and has made me the equal of that lady of noble birth."

And he knelt down and breathed a prayer of thankfulness to Heaven, and then forgot Heaven for her sake—for the sake of her picture in stone—for the Psyche which stood there as if formed of snow, blushing in the morning dawn.

He was to see her in reality, the living graceful Psyche, whose words sounded like music in his ears. He would now carry the news into the rich palace that the marble Psyche was finished. He betook himself thither, strode through the open courtyard where the water ran splashing from the dolphin's jaws into the marble basins, where the snowy lilies and the fresh roses bloomed in abundance. He stepped into the great lofty hall, whose walls and ceilings shone with gilding and bright colours and heraldic devices. Gaily dressed serving-men, adorned with trappings like sleigh-horses, walked to and fro, and some reclined at their ease upon the carved oak seats, as if they were the masters of the house. He told them what had brought him to the palace, and was conducted up the shining marble staircase covered with soft carpets and adorned with many a statue.

Then he went on through richly furnished chambers, over mosaic floors, amid gorgeous pictures. All this pomp and luxury seemed to weary him; but soon he felt relieved, for the princely old master of the house received him most graciously, almost heartily; and when he took his leave, he was requested to step into the Signora's apartment, for she, too, wished to see him. The servants led him through more luxurious halls and chambers into her room, where she appeared the chief and leading ornament.

She spoke to him. No hymn of supplication, no holy chant could melt his soul like the sound of her voice. He took her hand and lifted it to his lips: no rose was softer, but a fire thrilled through him from this rose—a feeling of power came upon him, and words poured from his tongue—he knew not what he said. Does the crater of the volcano know that glowing lava is pouring from it? He confessed what he felt for her. She stood before him astonished, offended, proud—with contempt in her face, an expression of disgust, as if she had suddenly touched a cold unclean reptile; her cheeks reddened, her lips grew white, and her eyes flashed fire, though they were dark as the blackness of night.

"Madman!" she cried, "away! begone!"

And she turned her back upon him. Her beautiful face wore an expression like that of the stony countenance with the snaky locks.

Like a stricken, fainting man, he tottered down the staircase and out into the street. Like a man walking in his sleep he found his way back to his dwelling. Then he woke up to madness and agony, and seized his hammer, swung it high in the air, and rushed forward to shatter the beautiful marble image. But in his pain he had not noticed that his friend Angelo stood beside him; and Angelo held back his arm with a strong grasp, crying,

"Are you mad? What are you about?"

Then they struggled together. Angelo was the stronger; and, with a deep sigh of exhaustion, the young artist threw himself into a chair.

"What has happened?" asked Angelo. "Command yourself! Speak!"

But what could he say? How could he explain? And as Angelo could make no sense of his friend's incoherent words, he forbore to question him further, and merely said,

"Your blood grows thick from your eternal dreaming. Be a man, as we others are, and don't go on living in ideals, for that is what drives men

crazy. A jovial feast will make you sleep quietly and happily. Believe me, the time will come when you will be old, and your sinews will shrink, and then, on some fine sunshiny day when everything is laughing and rejoicing, you will lie there a faded plant, that will grow no more. I do not live in dreams, but in reality. Come with me: be a man!"

And he drew the artist away with him. At this moment he was able to do so, for a fire ran in the blood of the young sculptor; a change had taken place in his soul; he felt a longing to tear himself away from the old, the accustomed—to forget, if possible, his own individuality; and therefore it was that he followed Angelo.

In an out-of-the-way suburb of Rome lay a tavern much visited by artists. It was built on the ruins of some ancient baths. The great yellow citrons hung down among the dark shining leaves, and covered a part of the old reddish-yellow walls. The tavern consisted of a vaulted chamber, almost like a cavern, in the ruins. A lamp burned there before the picture of the Madonna. A great fire gleamed on the hearth, and roasting and boiling was going on there; without, under the citron trees and laurels, stood a few covered tables.

The two artists were received by their friends with shouts of welcome. Little was eaten, but much was drunk, and the spirits of the company rose. Songs were sung, and ditties were played on the guitar; presently the *Saltarello* sounded, and the merry dance began. Two young Roman girls, who sat as models to the artists, took part in the dance and in the festivity. Two charming Bacchantes were they; certainly not Psyches—not delicate beautiful roses, but fresh, hearty, glowing carnations.

How hot it was on that day! Even after sundown it was hot: there was fire in the blood, fire in every glance, fire everywhere. The air gleamed with gold and roses, and life seemed like gold and roses.

"At last you have joined us for once," said his friends. "Now let yourself be carried by the waves within and around you."

"Never yet have I felt so well, so merry!" cried the young artist. "You are right, you are all of you right. I was a fool, a dreamer—man belongs to reality, and not to fancy."

With song and with sounding guitars the young people returned that evening from the tavern, through the narrow streets; the two glowing

The two Artists at the Tavern.

carnations, daughters of the Campagna, went with them.

In Angelo's room, among a litter of coloured sketches (studies) and glowing pictures, the voices sounded mellower, but not less merrily. On the ground lay many a sketch that resembled the daughters of the Campagna, in their fresh hearty

comeliness, but the two originals were far handsomer than their portraits. All the burners of the six-armed lamp flared and flamed; and the *human* flamed up from within, and appeared in the glare as if it were divine.

"Apollo! Jupiter! I feel myself raised to your heaven, to your glory! I feel as if the blossom of life were unfolding itself in my veins at this moment!"

Yes, the blossom unfolded itself, and then burst and fell, and an evil vapour arose from it, blinding the sight, leading astray the fancy—the firework of the senses went out, and it became dark.

He was again in his own room; there he sat down on his bed and collected his thoughts.

"Fie upon thee!" these were the words that sounded out of his mouth from the depths of his heart. "Wretched man, go! begone!" And a deep painful sigh burst from his bosom.

"Away! begone!" These, her words, the words of the living Psyche, echoed through his heart, escaped from his lips. He buried his head in the pillows, his thoughts grew confused, and he fell asleep.

In the morning dawn he started up, and collected his thoughts anew. What had happened?

Had all the past been a dream? The visit to *her*, the feast at the tavern, the evening with the purple carnations of the Campagna? No, it was all real —a reality he had never before experienced.

In the purple air gleamed the bright Star, and its beams fell upon him and upon the marble Psyche. He trembled as he looked at that picture of immortality, and his glance seemed impure to him. He threw the cloth over the statue, and then touched it once more to unveil the form—but he was not able to look again at his own work.

Gloomy, quiet, absorbed in his own thoughts, he sat there through the long day; he heard nothing of what was going on around him, and no man guessed what was passing in this human soul.

And days and weeks went by, but the nights passed more slowly than the days. The flashing Star beheld him one morning as he rose, pale and trembling with fever, from his couch; then he stepped towards the statue, threw back the covering, took one long sorrowful gaze at his work, and then, almost sinking beneath the burden, he dragged the statue out into the garden. In that place was an old dry well, now nothing but a pit, and into this he cast the Psyche, threw in earth

above her, and covered up the spot with twigs and nettles.

"Away! begone!" Such was the short epitaph he spoke.

The Star beheld all this from the pink morning sky, and its beam trembled upon two great tears upon the pale feverish cheeks of the young man; and soon it was said that he was sick unto death, and he lay stretched upon a bed of pain.

The convent Brother Ignatius visited him as a physician and a friend, and brought him words of comfort, of religion, and spoke to him of the peace and happiness of the Church, of the sinfulness of man, of rest and mercy to be found in heaven.

And the words fell like warm sunbeams upon a teeming soil. The soil smoked and sent up clouds of mist, fantastic pictures, pictures in which there was reality; and from these floating islands he looked across at human life. He found it vanity and delusion—and vanity and delusion it had been to him. They told him that art was a sorcerer, betraying us to vanity and to earthly lusts; that we are false to ourselves, unfaithful to our friends, unfaithful towards Heaven, and that the serpent was always repeating within us, "Eat, and thou shalt become as God!"

And it appeared to him as if now, for the first time, he knew himself, and had found the way that leads to truth and to peace. In the Church was the light and the brightness of God—in the monk's cell he should find the rest through which the tree of human life might grow on even into eternity.

Brother Ignatius strengthened his longings, and the determination became firm within him. A child of the world became a servant of the Church—the young artist renounced the world and retired into the cloister.

The brothers came forward affectionately to welcome him, and his inauguration was as a Sunday feast. Heaven seemed to him to dwell in the sunshine of the church, and to beam upon him from the holy pictures and from the cross. And when, in the evening, at the sunset hour, he stood in his little cell, and opening the window looked out upon old Rome, upon the desolated temples and the great dead Coliseum—when he saw all this in its spring garb, when the acacias bloomed, and the ivy was fresh, and roses burst forth everywhere, and the citron and orange were in the height of their beauty, and the palm trees waved their branches — then he felt a deeper

emotion than had ever yet thrilled through him. The quiet open Campagna spread itself forth towards the blue snow-covered mountains, which seemed to be painted in the air; all the outlines melting into each other, breathing peace and beauty, floating, dreaming—and all appearing like a dream!

Yes, this world was a dream, and the dream lasts for hours, and may return for hours; but convent life is a life of years — long years, and many years.

From within comes much that renders men impure. He felt the truth of this. What flames arose up in him at times! What a source of evil, of that which he would not, welled up continually! He mortified his body, but the evil came from within.

One day, after the lapse of many years, he met Angelo, who recognized him.

"Man!" exclaimed Angelo. "Yes, it is thou! Art thou happy now? Thou hast sinned against God, and cast away His boon from thee — hast neglected thy mission in this world! Read the parable of the intrusted talent! The MASTER, who spoke that parable, spoke truth! What hast

thou gained? what hast thou found? Dost thou not fashion for thyself a religion and a dreamy life after thine own idea, as almost all do? Suppose all this is a dream, a fair delusion!"

"Get thee away from me, Satan!" said the monk; and he quitted Angelo.

"There is a devil, a personal devil! This day I have seen him!" said the monk to himself. "Once I extended a finger to him, and he took my whole hand! But now," he sighed, "the evil is within me, and it is in yonder man; but it does not bow him down: he goes abroad with head erect, and enjoys his comfort; and I grasp at comfort in the consolations of religion. If it were nothing but a consolation? Suppose everything here were, like the world I have quitted, only beautiful fancy, a delusion, like the beauty of the evening clouds, like the misty blue of the distant hills!—when you approach them they are very different. O eternity! thou actest like the great calm ocean, that beckons us, and fills us with expectation—and when we embark upon thee, we sink, disappear, and cease to be. Delusion! away with it! begone!"

And tearless, but sunk in bitter reflection, he sat upon his hard couch, and then knelt down—

before whom? Before the stone cross fastened to the wall? No, it was only habit that made him take this position.

The more deeply he looked into his own heart the blacker did the darkness seem. "Nothing

The Penitent.

within, nothing without—this life squandered and cast away!" And this thought rolled and grew like a snowball, until it seemed to crush him.

"I can confide my griefs to none—I may speak to none of the gnawing worm within. My secret is my prisoner; if I let the captive escape, I shall be his!"

And the godlike power that dwelt within him suffered and strove.

"O Lord, my Lord!" he cried in his despair, "be merciful, and grant me faith! I threw away the gift Thou hadst vouchsafed to me, I left my mission unfulfilled. I lacked strength, and strength thou didst not give me. Immortality—the Psyche in my breast—away with it!—it shall be buried like that Psyche, the best gleam of my life; never will it arise out of its grave!"

The Star glowed in the roseate air, the Star that shall surely be extinguished and pass away, while the soul still lives on; its trembling beam fell upon the white wall, but it wrote nothing there upon being made perfect in God, nothing of the hope of mercy, of the reliance on the divine love that thrills through the heart of the believer.

"The Psyche within can never die! Shall it live in consciousness? Can the incomprehensible happen? Yes, yes. My being is incomprehensible. Thou art unfathomable, O Lord. Thy whole world is incomprehensible—a wonder-work of power, of glory, and of love!"

His eyes gleamed, and then closed in death. The tolling of the church bell was the last sound that echoed above him, above the dead man; and

they buried him, covering him with earth that had been brought from Jerusalem, and in which was mingled the dust of many of the pious dead.

When years had gone by, his skeleton was dug up, as the skeletons of the monks who had died before him had been: it was clad in a brown frock, a rosary was put into the bony hand, and the form was placed among the ranks of other skeletons in the cloisters of the convent. And the sun shone without, while within the censers were waved and the Mass was celebrated.

And years rolled by.

The bones fell asunder and became mingled with others. Skulls were piled up till they formed an outer wall around the church; and there lay also *his* head in the burning sun, for many dead were there, and no one knew their names, and his name was forgotten also. And see, something was moving in the sunshine, in the sightless cavernous eyes —what might that be? A sparkling lizard moved about in the skull, gliding in and out of the sightless holes. The lizard now represented all the life left in that head, in which once great thoughts, bright dreams, the love of art and the glorious had arisen, whence hot tears had rolled down, where

hope and immortality had had their being. The lizard sprang away and disappeared, and the skull itself crumbled to pieces and became dust among dust.

Centuries passed away. The bright Star gleamed unaltered, radiant and large, as it had gleamed for thousands of years, and the air glowed red with tints fresh as roses, crimson like blood.

There where once had stood the narrow lane containing the ruins of a temple, a nunnery was now built; a grave was being dug in the convent garden, for a young nun had died, and was to be laid in the earth this morning. The spade struck against a hard substance: it was a stone, that shone dazzling white. A block of marble soon appeared, a rounded shoulder was laid bare, and now the spade was plied with a more careful hand, and presently a female head was seen, and butterflies' wings. Out of the grave in which the young nun was to be laid in the rosy morning they lifted a wonderful statue of a Psyche, carved in white marble.

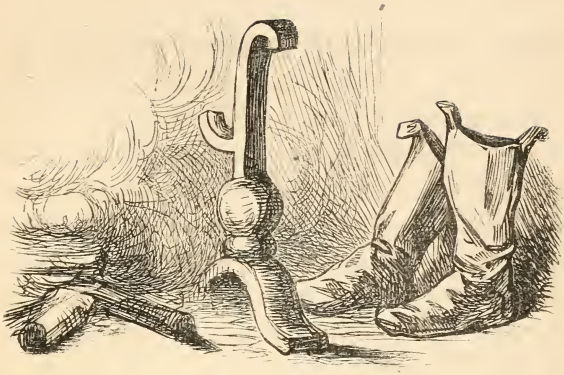
"How beautiful, how perfect it is!" cried the spectators. "A relic of the best period of art."

And who could the sculptor have been? No one knew, no one remembered him, except the bright

Star that had gleamed for thousands of years. The Star had seen the course of that life on earth, and knew of the man's trials, of his weakness—in fact, that he had been but human. The man's life had passed away, his dust had been scattered abroad as dust is destined to be; but the result of his noblest striving, the glorious work that gave token of the divine element within him—the Psyche that never dies, that lives beyond posterity—the brightness even of this earthly Psyche remained here after him, and was seen, and acknowledged, and appreciated.

The bright Morning Star in the roseate air threw its glancing ray downward upon the Psyche, and upon the radiant countenances of the admiring spectators, who here beheld the *image of the soul* portrayed in marble.

What is earthly will pass away and be forgotten, and the Star in the vast firmament knows it. What is heavenly will shine brightly through posterity; and when the ages of posterity are past, the Psyche—the soul—will still live on!



MY BOOTS.

A TRUE STORY.

IN Rome there is a street called "Via della Purificazione," but no one can say of this street that it *is* purified. It goes up hill and down hill, and cabbage stalks and potsherds are to be found strewn all over it; the smoke comes out at the door of the *osteria* or inn, and the Signora who lives opposite—I can't help it, but it's the fact—the Signora who lives opposite shakes the bed linen out at the windows every morning. In this street many foreigners have their dwelling-place, but this year the fear of fever and malignant sickness kept most of them away at Florence and

Naples. I lived quite alone in a big house, and not even my host and hostess slept there at night.

It was a great cold house, with a little damp garden, in which nothing grew but a pea and a half withered stock; but the neighbouring gardens, which lay higher, were smiling with monthly roses and trees full of yellow lemons. The latter could bear the continual rain well, but the hedges of monthly roses looked as if they had been lying in the sea for a week.

The evenings were so lonely in the great cold rooms! The chimney yawned between the windows, and rain and storm were raging without. All the doors were certainly provided with locks and bolts, but what was the use? The wind whistled in shrill tones through the cracks in the doors, the meagre logs on the hearth flamed up, but they did not diffuse their heat far around. The cold stone floor, the naked walls, and the wooden ceiling seemed made only for the summer-time. If I wanted to be really comfortable, I was obliged to don my warm travelling boots, overcoat, cloak, and fur cap; and then only did I feel tolerably warm. The side I turned towards the chimney was certainly half roasted on these occasions; but in this world a man must learn how to

turn himself round, and accordingly I turned like a weathercock.

The evenings were somewhat long; but now my teeth hit upon the idea of giving a few nervous concerts, and it was wonderful how their faculty of execution increased. A solid Danish toothache can't be compared with an Italian one. The pain plays about on the tips of the teeth as if Thalberg and Liszt were sitting down before them; sometimes it rumbles in the foreground, sometimes in the background, as if two warlike choruses were answering one another, while a great front tooth takes the part of first singer, with all the cadences and shakes, from the highest notes of agony; and there was such a completeness about the whole performance, that I was taken quite out of myself.

The evening concerts changed to night concerts; and it was during the course of one of these performances, while the windows shook in the wind and the rain was splashing without, that I cast a mournful look at the night lamp. My inkstand stood near it, and I saw quite plainly how the pen went dancing over the paper, as if it were being guided by an invisible hand; but the fact was, it was writing on its own account. It was writing from dictation; and who was dictating? It sounds

incredible, but it is true — I will tell it, and my friends will believe me—my boots, my old Copenhagen boots, which had been stood up in the chimney corner, because they were wet through with the rain! If I was suffering from toothache, they were suffering from dropsy. They dictated their history; and this story, I think, will throw some light upon the Italian winter of 1840—1841.

WHAT MY BOOTS TOLD ME.

We are two brothers: Right Boot and Left Boot. The first thing we remember is being well rubbed with blacking and thoroughly brushed. I could see the reflection of myself in my brother, while he was mirrored in me, and we saw that we formed a two in one, a kind of Castor and Pollux, a sort of Siamese twins, whom fate had intended to live and to die together, to exist and to pass away in union. We are both natives of Copenhagen.

The shoemaker's boy carried us gently out into the world; and the care thus bestowed on our well-being awakened within us sweet but delusive hopes concerning our destination. The man at whose house we arrived pulled us by the ears till we encircled his legs, and then he walked down

stairs upon us. We creaked with joy! It was raining outside, but still we creaked!—but our creaking only lasted for one day.

Alas! what a quantity of dampness there is to be got through in the world! We were never intended for water boots, and consequently we felt unhappy. No brush could give us back the youthful brightness we had possessed on the day when the shoemaker's boy carried us through the streets. Who can describe our delight, therefore, when one morning we heard that we were to journey into a foreign land, into Italy, into that mild genial country, where we should walk on marble and on classic ground, and bask in the sun, and should certainly win back our youthful bloom! We started on the journey. During the longest stages we slept in the travelling chest and dreamed of the warm country; in the towns, on the other hand, we looked about us bravely. But the weather was wet and rough, as in Denmark. Our soles became ill, and mortification set in, so that they had to be taken off in Munich; but we received false soles, that fitted us as well as if they had been born with us.

"If we were but on the other side of the Alps," we sighed; "it is mild and beautiful there!"

For it rained and the wind blew; and if we stepped upon marble now and again, the cold was so icy that it drove a cold chill through our soles, and a damp impression of ourselves remained where we had trodden. In the evening it was agreeable enough, when the servant in the hotel came and numbered all the strange boots. We were placed among these travelling companions, and heard them tell of the cities from whence they came. There was a pair of handsome red morocco legs with black feet—I think it was in Bologna—who told us of the warm summer in Rome and Naples; they related their wanderings on Vesuvius, where their soles had been burned off them by the subterranean heat, till we almost felt a longing to die in that way.

"Oh, if we were but on the other side of the mountains! if we were but in Rome!

"And we got there at last. But now we have been wandering in the rain and in the mud week after week: everything must be seen, and there's no end of sights and of down-pours! Not a single warm ray has refreshed us, and the cold wind has been continually blowing around us. O Rome! Rome! To-night, while we are standing by a warm fire, we drink in warmth for the first time from

the blessed hearth, and we will drink and drink till we burst. The upper-leather is gone already, and now we are but legs, but those shall burst too! But before we perish by this delightful death, we desire that this our story may be written down, and that our corpses may be carried to Berlin, that they may rest near the truth-loving Nicolai—near him who had the courage to paint 'Italy as it is'—"

And, saying these words, the Boots fell asunder. It became quite still, and my night lamp went out. I myself slept little, and when I awoke in the morning twilight, I considered it a dream. But I looked towards the hearth and beheld there the Boots all shrivelled up—they looked like two mummies in the cold ashes. I looked at the paper which lay near the lamp: it was a bit of grey paper covered with blots. The pen had run across it, but all was blurred together; for, you see, it was grey paper on which the pen had written the memoirs of the Boots.

I wrote down what I remembered of their story; and let it be remembered, that it was not I, but my Boots, that cried, "alas! and Oh for *la bella Italia!*"

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